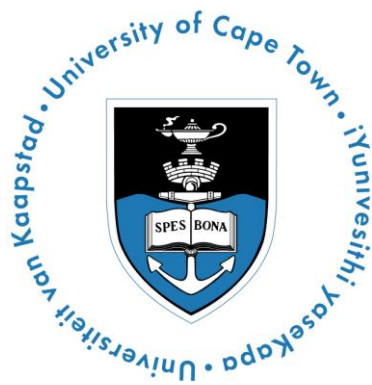


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# ***Regional Higher Education Initiatives: Lessons for Southern Africa***

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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the academic

requirements for the award of the degree of:

Master of Social Science in International Relations

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

2011

Supervisor:

Dr. John Akokpari

## COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted, in whole or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contributor to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been properly cited and referenced.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

University of Cape Town

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was not accomplished without the caring and consistent support from some important people in my life.

I am truly thankful for my family whose support has carried me to this point in my life. My parents have always supported and encouraged my academic pursuits and their influence in my intellectual curiosity has allowed me to get to this point in my academic career. My grandparents and siblings have also encouraged and supported me throughout my studies and to them I am grateful.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. John Akokpari, for his patient and encouraging support throughout this project. His warm and comforting responses to my emails and questions were always much appreciated.

Additional academic support was offered from my mentors at the College of Charleston, Dr. Helen Delfeld and Dr. John Creed. For their concern with my academic success, I am always appreciative.

My sincere thankfulness must go to my friends who have patiently encouraged me throughout the process of developing, researching, and writing this thesis. There are many times throughout the writing process that support from Leendert Remmelzwaal and Claire Price kept me going and for that I am truly grateful.

Finally, this thesis would not have been possible without Rotary International who sponsored my study in South Africa through the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar programme. I would like to thank Rotary International for its generous support and commitment to improving intercultural understanding through the Ambassadorial Scholar programme.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father, David Thompson, who inspired and encouraged me every day of his life. I am grateful for his influence in my life and the blessing of having him as my daddy. He believed in my abilities often more than I did and his encouragement enabled me to become the first person in my family to submit a Masters dissertation for consideration. I hope that this work makes him proud. Thanks for being “my biggest fan!”

University of Cape Town

## ABSTRACT

This thesis critically analyses the state of regional higher education cooperation with the goal of extrapolating lessons from Europe through the Bologna Process and South America through the MERCOSUR-Educativo project for future regional higher education arrangements broadly and southern Africa specifically. In approaching the issue of regionalisation of higher education, the thesis explores the relationship between regionalisation and globalisation and their respective influences on regional higher education arrangements. International trends, pressures, and tensions in higher education are discussed including scholarship and analysis from diverse sources in order to provide a foundation for the case studies investigated in the research. The discussion includes the tensions between competition and cooperation, centralisation and autonomy, concepts of governance and legitimacy, and the trends of the growing knowledge economy. The thesis also uses regional theory to understand and explain the attempts to develop cooperation in higher education within each region. Ultimately, the central argument is that there are gaps and limits in SADC's approaches to higher education governance and valuable lessons can be learned from other regions particularly in terms of structure, legitimacy, political commitment, clear and narrow goals, and follow-up. SADC has so far not been successful in its attempts to regionalise higher education and this thesis argues that learning from other regions will improve regional higher education arrangements in southern Africa in the future. The thesis ends by linking the case studies with relevant regional theory, identifying strengths and limits of regional higher education initiatives, and providing recommendations for these arrangements and future research.

# LIST OF ACRONYMS

**AU** – African Union

**COE** – Council of Europe

**EC** – European Commission

**ECTS** - European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

**ENQA** - European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

**EHEA** – European Higher Education Area

**EU** – European Union

**HEIs** – Higher Education Institutions

**MARCA** - Regional Academic Mobility of Accredited Careers

**MERCOSUR** – Mercado Comun del Sur (Common Southern Market)

**MEXA** - Experimental Mechanism of Accreditation

**MME** - Meeting of the Ministers of Education of MERCOSUR

**OECD** – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

**RECs** – Regional Economic Communities

**SADC** – Southern African Development Community

**SADCC** - Southern African Development Coordination Conference

**SADCSTAN** – Southern African Development Community Cooperation in Standardization

**SARUA** – Southern African Regional Universities Association

**UNESCO** – United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

**WB** – World Bank

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# CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION, METHODOLOGY, THEORY

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The contemporary international economy is influenced by trends that increase interdependence, cross-border projects, international relationships, and trade. Globalisation has created a variety of responses in the international community. One specific and striking response by various regions of the world is the development of regional organizations in reaction to the pressures and trends created by globalisation. These regional organisations have shared goals and projects ranging from economic to political to social to cultural, among others.

With the development of regional organizations and focus on regional economic arrangements, the development of human capital and labour markets to serve the needs of various regions has become a growing concern. This concern has largely affected the higher education sector in particular because of its international scope and potential impacts on economic development.

There is a growing tendency in the international community for regional bodies to seek to harmonise education policies, practices, and qualifications.<sup>1</sup> The word 'harmonisation' is used in each case slightly differently, which will be a point of consideration of this research. Given the global trend to harmonise higher education policy at the regional level, this thesis seeks to investigate the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges of regional arrangements that seek to harmonise higher education. Efforts to increase comparability of systems and ultimately harmonise higher education at the regional level require critical scrutiny and analysis with regional theory before continuing. This thesis is an effort to critically analyse the state of higher education cooperation in southern Africa with a goal of drawing lessons from the European and South American efforts for southern Africa. Using the Bologna Process and MERCOSUR-Educativo, the thesis extrapolates lessons for Southern Africa. Southern Africa is selected because of the longstanding history of attempts at regional integration and the need for some harmonisation of certification in higher education.

There exist many forms of education and certification in Africa based on foundations as varied as national agendas and colonial histories.<sup>2</sup> These various forms of education limit transferability of

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<sup>1</sup> Bologna Protocol, MERCOSUR-Educativo, and SADC Education and Training Protocol.

<sup>2</sup> Harmonization of Higher Education in Africa Summary Report

certification and mobility of labour in Africa. In addition, the diverse education and training levels of labour limit integration efforts. These limitations, however, have not stopped the efforts to integrate but have perhaps provided a framework for attempting cooperative and integrative efforts. Africa's efforts to develop regional bodies and inter-state cooperation are not new. By 1990, 49 African states had already joined sub-regional economic communities,<sup>3</sup> which reveals the longstanding commitment to regional cooperation in Africa. Given the longstanding desire to integrate and obvious need for cooperation with regard to higher education, it is important to understand the specific context of higher education in southern Africa. This specific context is a point of consideration for this thesis and is detailed in greater detail in chapter four.

In order to consolidate the scope of this project to a manageable study, I take the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as a primary focus of study as a southern African regional organization. The SADC is both a recognized Regional Economic Community (REC) by the African Union and the only regional body in southern Africa to have passed a region-wide protocol responding to the issue of higher education and training. As such, it becomes a useful tool for understanding the state of international cooperation in the field of higher education in southern Africa and the approaches to deal with this issue on a regional level. Additionally the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA), which is a membership-based organization comprised of representatives of 51 of the public universities in southern Africa is an alternative mechanism for regional cooperation in higher education in southern Africa. As such, it is additionally considered as a mechanism for facilitating regional efforts in higher education for the region.

To deal with the comparability of certification issue as well as the lack of quality control on a regional level, the SADC developed the Education and Training Protocol in 1997. This effort resembles, at least in language, the European efforts to improve the same issues through the Bologna Declaration and the MERCOSUR-Educativo programme in South America. The forty-seven participating countries of the Bologna Process in Europe, to create the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), have come together with the goal of accomplishing: increased mobility of students and teachers, a system of transferrable credits, comparable degrees, a two-cycle system of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, improved quality assurance mechanisms, and promotion

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<sup>3</sup> Asante, S.K.B. 1997. *Regionalisation and Africa's Development: Expectations, Reality, and Challenges*, Ch. 2. London: Macmillan.

of European standards in order to improve the status of higher education in Europe<sup>4</sup>. Similar to the situation in southern Africa, the curricula and certifications in Europe had been so varied up to this point as to limit mobility of staff and students and transferability of certifications and credits. The efficacy of the European attempts appears to be greater and the political commitment to achieving the goals also appears stronger. As such, there are potential lessons to be drawn from the European case for southern Africa.

Additionally, the contextual similarities of the South American case to that of Southern Africa make it a useful case to consider. Mercado Comun del Sur (MERCOSUR), or the Common Market of the South was founded with the Treaty of Asuncion in order to develop a common market in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. In 1998, the organisation passed the Experimental Procedure for the Accreditation of Programmes for Recognition of University Undergraduate Degrees. The agreement created an Education Area within the region. MERCOSUR considered the Education Area a priority from its outset and allowed the Meeting of Ministries of Education (MME) to be the forum for decision making for the initiative.<sup>5</sup> The initial objectives were the recognition and accreditation of degree programmes to improve mobility in the region. MERCOSUR has since developed several mechanisms for ensuring comparability of systems, but has left implementation to the national partners rather than creating supra-national mechanisms. This is the starkest difference between the South American and European cases. Additionally, resource challenges create significant hurdles in South America, which make it a useful case to consider when attempting to inform southern African attempts to harmonise higher education. The regional implications of these efforts and the different approaches are valuable for understanding the future of higher education and international cooperation in this area. However, neither approach is without its critiques and shortcomings.<sup>6</sup> These critiques and shortcomings will be discussed in detail with a goal of finding parallels and ultimately lessons for the southern African case.

The contexts of the European, South American, and southern African cases are considered and linked with the seemingly similar policy goals. The contextual relevance and interpretation of the similar policy objectives does result in varied prioritisation and relevance of the regional goals. This difference in prioritisation, however, does have two distinct similarities with regard to

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<sup>4</sup> Bologna Declaration. 1999. *The European Higher Education Area: Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education*. Bologna, Italy.

<sup>5</sup> Lamarra, N. 2003. Higher Education, quality evaluation and accreditation in Latin America and MERCOSUR. *European Journal of Education* Vol. 38, No. 3: 253-269.

<sup>6</sup> Cardoso, A, Portela, M, Sa, C., and Alexandre, F. 2007. Demand for higher education programs: the impact of the Bologna process. CESifo Venice Summer Institute. Venice International University.

qualification frameworks and quality assurance mechanisms.<sup>7</sup> Both of these goals link with implications at the regional level of labour mobility, comparability of qualification, and transparency. The backgrounds and details of the SADC's attempts and the European and South American efforts will be discussed in greater detail in each Chapter 4 and Chapter 3, respectively.

## 1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**The primary research question for this thesis is:** What are the strengths and limits of structural attempts at regional harmonisation of Higher Education and, using the two cases of the Bologna Process and MERCOSUR-Educativo, can these be used to inform higher education regionalisation in Southern Africa?

**Auxiliary research question for this thesis is:** To what extent do the theoretical approaches in each of the regional arrangements differ and how can this inform efforts in Southern Africa?

This thesis analyses the SADC's attempts to improve higher education in the region while paralleling the southern African experience to that of Europe through the Bologna Process and to South America through the MERCOSUR-Educativo with the goal of deriving potential lessons for southern Africa. This thesis assesses the theoretical approaches used to develop cooperation in higher education in each region and draws on the potential implications for southern Africa from the European and South American examples. This thesis takes as its foundation that higher education disparities in the southern African region are vast and that the regional efforts to improve and harmonise education are important to consider in light of the growing emphasis on knowledge in the global economy. Additionally, broader conclusions about the strengths and limits of regional higher education initiatives are derived from the study.

The central argument of this thesis is that there are gaps and limits in the SADC's approaches to higher education governance and valuable lessons can be learned from other regions particularly in terms of structure, legitimacy, political commitment, clear and narrow goals, and follow-up. The SADC has so far not been successful in its attempts to regionalise higher education and this thesis

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<sup>7</sup> Watson, P. 2009. Regional themes and global means in supra-national higher education policy. *Higher Education* Vol. 59: 419-438.

argues that learning from other regions will improve regional higher education arrangements in southern Africa in the future.

### 1.3 METHODOLOGY

This thesis takes a qualitative approach to analyse the data and answer the research questions. As such, this thesis utilises primary and secondary sources to advance its claims. Various protocols from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Council of Europe, European Union, the Bologna Declaration, subsequent Communiqués of the Bologna Process, MERCOSUR initiatives, and MERCOSUR-Educativo are analysed to provide a foundation for analysis. Statistical information is taken from publications by the World Bank, the Southern African Regional Universities Association, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to advance the claims. This thesis additionally draws upon scholarship about education and development, regional theory, the SADC organization, the Bologna process, and MERCOSUR-Educativo and other political economy theory to approach the issue.

Limitations of this study include the occasional deficiency of available and recent data about the countries in the SADC. The process of knowledge accumulation and harmonisation of education at the regional level is still ongoing and any claims or analysis of it is based on available information at the time of submission of this thesis. Also, the discussion of the South American case through MERCOSUR is limited in terms of accessible information in English and this researcher's basic operational knowledge of Spanish. These factors limit the accessibility of certain Protocols and agreements of the MERCOSUR, so some description of these relies on secondary sources. In addition, recognizing that education is a broad and diverse field, this paper focuses on intergovernmental efforts in Europe, South America, and southern Africa to improve higher education. Other facets of education are mentioned and discussed, but the goal of this thesis is to focus the study in order to make it manageable and to arrive at useful conclusions.

This thesis employs regional theory to understand regional higher education initiatives. It is now important to consider the trends in regional theory as they relate to this study. An introduction of the concept of 'regionness' follows the discussion of regional theory in order to provide a context for understanding the social and cultural implications of regional integration.

## 1.4 REGIONAL THEORY

Regional theory is an important foundation for understanding various regional initiatives and goals. Regional theory has a long history and diverse schools of thought within it. Before undertaking analysis of regions and comparison between them, it is important to not only explain the theoretical background, but to also define such terms as region, regionalism, and regionalisation. The terms “region” and “regionalism” are discussed in this section, while the term “regionalisation” is discussed in the next chapter alongside globalisation, internationalisation, and de-nationalisation.

A “region” can be viewed in multiple ways including a group of countries without geographic proximity that have similar goals, particular areas within countries, or from a cultural, social, or linguistic lens. The term “region”, as used in this study, refers to a group of states in a similar geographic area.

“Regionalism” is a contentious term, which has little agreement amongst scholars.<sup>8</sup> Definitions include those involving economic relationships, political commitments in particular areas, and vary to include both state and non-state actors participating in cross-border initiatives. “Regional integration” can be viewed as both a process in itself and as the result of a process of seeking integration.<sup>9</sup> Asante suggests that there are two types of integration, negative and positive. Negative integration requires reducing or eliminating discrimination against participating members, while positive integration refers to the “formation and application of coordinated and common policies in order to fulfil economic and welfare objectives other than the mere removal of discrimination”.<sup>10</sup> Discussion of education and training in various regions requires both negative and positive integration strategies; negative in the elimination of discrimination of persons migrating within the region for education purposes and positive in the development of common policies and harmonisation of existing policies and standards for education in addition to coordinated strategies to provide social services to citizens of the region rather than specific countries.

Economic integration, however, has different implications for developed and developing regions. Asante argues that economic integration must be redefined for developing countries and “the

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<sup>8</sup> Lee, 2003.; Hurrell, 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Asante, S.K.B. 1997. *Regionalisation and Africa's Development: Expectations, Reality, and Challenges*, Ch. 2. London: Macmillan.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

ultimate purpose of economic integration is either to achieve an acceleration of economic growth in the partner countries, given the limited amount of scarce resources available, or alternatively, to maintain the same rate of growth as before integration, but at a lower cost in terms of the use of scarce resources".<sup>11</sup> The various approaches to integration complicate the discussion about potential goals of the integration itself. Margaret Lee's definition of regionalism (and the one that is sufficiently comprehensive to be used in this study) is "the adoption of a regional project by a formal regional economic organisation designed to enhance the political, economic, social, cultural, and security integration and/or cooperation of member states".<sup>12</sup>

The definitional issues regarding the above terms serve to provide context about the multitude of ways that regionalism and regional efforts are conceptualised around the world. The specific debate about these concepts is not the heart of this thesis, so little attention is given to the contentious intricacies of this debate from this point forward. The introduction to the theory discussion with an outline of this debate has simply provided a framework for understanding the multiplicity of voices in the discussion about regional theory and regional attempts to harmonise higher education around the world.

Broadly, regional theory can be chronologically differentiated into old and new regionalism<sup>13</sup>, each of which has slightly different main goals. Old regionalism is characterised by its emphasis on economic relationships between states, whereas new regionalism includes political will as a primary component. Old regionalism has its roots in the state-driven approaches during the 1950s in Europe to coordinate economic policy. The initial goal in these arrangements was to use economic relationships to facilitate political relationships and therefore insure long-lasting peace in the region. Old regionalism is most often associated with the works of theorist such as Ernst B. Haas and David Mittrany. The end of the Cold War and its subsequent transformation of the international political economy is the most useful reference point for the transition between old and new regionalism.<sup>14</sup>

The international political economy transformed with the end of the Cold War and subsequently opened opportunities for new forms of political and economic relationships between states. This

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<sup>11</sup> Asante, p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> Lee, M. 2003, pg. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Breslin, S., Hughes, C., Phillips, N., and Rosamond, B (eds.). 2002. *New Regionalisms in the Global Political Economy: Theories and Cases*. London and New York: Routledge.

<sup>14</sup> Marchand, M. Boas, M., and Shaw, T. 1999. The Political Economy of New Regionalisms. *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 20, No. 5: 897-910.



context provides a foundation for discussion of contemporary regional theory, which will be outlined in greater detail in the next section. Also, it is worth noting that new regionalism theory provides several additional frameworks for understanding regional initiatives in the contemporary globalised world: open regionalism, the WIDER approach, regionalism from below, and the external guarantors' model. As the diversity of approaches indicates, new regionalism is comprised of several schools of thought and encompasses a wide range of opinions. It is important to note, though, that a main distinction between old and new regionalism is the influence made by formal and informal structures in each. New regionalism is distinguished by its focus on civil society, market forces, transnational networks, informal cross-border networks, and professional and business associations.<sup>15</sup>

Contemporary regional theory has three main approaches: regional cooperation, market integration, and development integration.

### *Regional Cooperation*

Regional cooperation differs in scale and scope from regional integration.<sup>16</sup> Because of its diversity, regional cooperation is much more difficult to categorise and analyse than other theoretical approaches to integration. Regional cooperation is suggested as an essential first step for countries before integration can take place and refers to collaboration between countries with similar interests.<sup>17</sup> In addition, the term is defined as “a process whereby nation states in common solve tasks and create improved conditions in order to maximize economic, political, social and cultural benefits for each participating country”.<sup>18</sup> Participating states in regional arrangements seek to solve problems at the national or regional level through cooperation with other states experiencing similar problems. This form of cooperation allows countries to improve regional economic interaction, without the requirements of rapid liberalisation that could be detrimental to growth and development.<sup>19</sup>

Regional cooperation can include: “1. Execution of joint projects, technical sector cooperation, common running of services and policy harmonisation; 2. Joint development of common natural

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<sup>15</sup> Stephan, et al.

<sup>16</sup> Integration will be addressed in the following sections on market integration and development integration.

<sup>17</sup> Lee, M. 2003. *The Political Economy of Regionalism in Southern Africa*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

<sup>18</sup> Haarlov, J. 1997. Haarlov, J. 1997. *Regional Cooperation and Integration within Industry and Trade in Southern Africa*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited. p. 16.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

resources; 3. Joint stand towards the rest of the world; and 4. Joint promotion of production”.<sup>20</sup> Joint projects and technical cooperation mostly involves transport, communications, and energy. However, additional public services in areas with limited resources and funding can benefit from regional cooperation. Haarlov identifies education, training, and research as one of these areas because the “small size of most African economies and the limitations to public expenditures there is a strong case for pooling resources as regards specialized training institutes”.<sup>21</sup> The pooling of resources to improve these services is a laudable goal, but without redistributive mechanisms, as suggested in development integration, these strategies are likely to concentrate benefits to some countries more than others. Pooling of resources is not necessarily a requirement in regional cooperation as cooperation can also include common policies that are enforced at the national level. Regional cooperation can take many forms, but relies on individual states to pursue a cooperative end.

### *Market Integration*

Market integration often occurs after cooperation has taken place at the regional level. Market integration is the process by which a region moves from a free trade area to an economic union. This integration involves five consecutive steps from a free trade area to total economic integration and concerns economic relations rather than political ones. Viner’s customs union theory is a clear example and involves the elimination of tariff barriers between member states and a common external party tariff.<sup>22</sup> The costs and benefits of market integration are assessed in terms of trade creation and trade diversion. Trade creation involves the shift from utilizing a high-cost external producer to a lower-cost regional one, while trade diversion involves changing from a low-cost external producer to one that is a higher-cost regional producer.<sup>23</sup> Potential gains from market integration include increased production, increased output, integration with the world economy, and increased capital flows.<sup>24</sup> However, to access these gains, several prerequisite conditions must be achieved, including similar development among member states, harmonised economic policies, regional macroeconomic stability, existing intra-regional trade, complementary development among member countries, and political stability among others. As a critique of Viner’s theories, it is important to note that the process of economic integration is not purely an economic struggle. To truly accomplish integration, politics, technology, education, and other institutions must also be

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<sup>20</sup> Haarlov, Pg 16.

<sup>21</sup> Haarlov, pg 17.

<sup>22</sup> Viner, J. 1950. *The Customs Union Issue*. New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

<sup>23</sup> Gerber in Lee, M. 2003. *The Political Economy of Regionalism in Southern Africa*. Boulder: Lynner Rienner.

<sup>24</sup> Robson, P. 1980. *The Economics of International Integration*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: George Allen and Unwin.

engaged and considered.<sup>25</sup> Market integration is most closely related to the European Union and its evolution over time.

### *Development Integration*

Development integration is another form of integration, but unlike market integration seeks to remedy the problems potentially created by the attempts to integrate. This form of integration is most relevant for developing countries. As globalisation does not equally impact all areas of the world, regionalisation also rarely equally affects all Member states and development integration responds to these inequities. The development integration model effectively links the goals of integration and development by focusing on both economic and social development. Therefore, developmental regionalism or integration is a tool of collective improvement because the goal is to improve all of the partnering countries. This model is particularly useful when considering a topic like education because of its economic and social components. Developmental integration is founded on the critique of traditional integration strategies that are focused on efficiency maximization because for countries “with low levels of industrialisation and little productive capacity, increased efficiency through regional market expansion is often meaningless”.<sup>26</sup> Developmental integration also uses as its backbone the political commitment of states, rather than allowing that commitment to come at a later stage as occurs with market integration.<sup>27</sup> This theory uses similar principles to market integration in that it sees market expansion as enabling countries to become internationally competitive, but it takes a developmental focus in order to address problems involved with openness. One of the primary ways that development integration responds to inequalities in implementation is through compensatory mechanisms for countries negatively affected by regional objectives.

With regard to harmonising education and creating hubs for education development in the region, there is potential to disproportionately benefit some member states more than others, which is addressed with the development integration strategy. A critique of the compensatory measures, however, is the fact that compensatory measures still do not adequately remunerate marginalised countries. This critique specifically applies to cash transfers, but may not apply to the same degree with issues of education and human capital. Development integration proposes a number of

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<sup>25</sup> Herrera in Asante, S.K.B. 1997. *Regionalisation and Africa's Development: Expectations, Reality, and Challenges*, Ch. 2. London: Macmillan.

<sup>26</sup> Stephan, H., M. Power, A. Hervey, and Raymond Fonseca. 2006. *The Scramble for Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A view from the South*. Cape Town: Renaissance Press. 286.

<sup>27</sup> Lee, M. 2003. *The Political Economy of Regionalism in Southern Africa*. Boulder: Lynner Rienner.

additional corrective measures to accommodate for unequal benefit from regional integration. The commitment of this development integration to pursuing equitable benefit is one of its greatest strengths and makes it a viable option for the disparate states in developing regions.

The theoretical approaches to implementing various regional integration initiatives provide a useful context for scholars to understand the structural approaches to harmonise higher education at the regional level. In addition, the political and economic components to regional cooperation and integration must be considered and addressed alongside specific efforts in regional organizations, such as efforts to improve and harmonise education.

## 1.5 “REGIONNESS”

In addition to regional theory, it is important to consider what constitutes a region and what components contribute to “regionness”. Hettne and Soderbaum write in the new regionalism theory tradition, which is still expanding and under development in many ways. An important addition of this tradition to scholarship about regionalism is the concept of “regionness”. Regions are social and political projects that can be influenced and changed by other disrupted and affected by other processes such as globalisation, nation-building and disintegration.

‘Regionness’ can be understood as “the process whereby a geographical area is transformed from a passive object to an active subject, capable of articulating the transnational interests of the emerging region”.<sup>28</sup> A region’s regionness is conditional and can change over time.

Regionness has five levels: regional space, regional complex, regional society, regional community, and region-state. ‘Regional space’ is an important component that recognizes the importance of territorial space to a region. A region, in this understanding, is a “a group of people living in a geographically bounded community, controlling a certain set of natural resources, and united through a certain set of cultural values and common bonds of social order forged by history”.<sup>29</sup> This step is the simple recognition of a region as space, a fertile ground for further development of political and economic relationships. Next is the ‘regional complex’ which involves increase in the

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<sup>28</sup> Hettne, B. and Soderbaum, F. 2002. Theorising the rise of regionness in Breslin, S., Hughes, C., Phillips, N., and Rosamond, B (eds.). *New Regionalisms in the Global Political Economy: Theories and Cases*. London and New York: Routledge.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 39.

interactions of peoples within the regional space. This may be affected by the consolidation of state formation and nation-building. The 'regional complex' is likely associated with historic relationships and provide a foundation for the regionalisation process. Regionalisation develops and intensifies at the level of 'regional society' where non-state actors seek to transcend the nation-state. This may involve formal regional cooperation or through other organic processes. The relationships in this stage are institutionalised and mutual trust increases. The formal structures assist in region-building. The next level of regionness is the 'regional community' where the region takes on an identity and has legitimacy as an entity in itself. There is a structure of decision-making. The citizenry exist as entities of the region itself and transcend previous national boundaries. The region in this case defines the relationship between the region and the rest of the world by serving as a collective voice. In the case of formal regional communities, the inclusion of new members can disrupt the sense of unity and regionness in this stage. Finally, the 'region-state' is the ultimate level of regionness. Although it is hypothetical and unlikely to be realized by most regions, it is important to consider the ultimate level of the progression of regionness as an intellectual undertaking. The region-state cannot be based on force, but will represent a voluntary submission of a group of previously sovereign states into one political entity. The authority and power in this form of organisation will not be centralised, but divided between many layers in society. The Maastricht Treaty outlines this level of regionness.

The idea of regionness is an important consideration in the discussion of regional higher education arrangements because a region's regionness incorporates social, cultural, economic, and political concerns, which are all intertwined in the development of regional higher education arrangements. A region's level of regionness can also determine the level of ease or difficulty in agreeing to crucial components of the intricacies of the higher education issue. The notions of mobility and citizenry as well as public vs private responsibility for education and accountability and legitimacy of higher education governance are all complex debates which are eased by a higher degree of regionness.

## 1.6 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 2 is a review of existing literature about the relationship between regionalisation and globalisation and the impacts of regionalisation on higher education. International trends in higher education are discussed as well as the scholarship about regional higher education initiatives

broadly. Additionally, the tensions between competition and cooperation, centralisation and autonomy, as well as governance structures are discussed in the context of regional initiatives in order to set an appropriate context for the specific discussions about each regional higher education initiative that follows. The international focus on the knowledge economy is also discussed and considered as it relates to regional higher education initiatives.

Chapter 3 outlines two specific regional initiatives in higher education – the Bologna Process in Europe and the MERCOSUR-Educativo programme in South America. The specific histories and backgrounds of both initiatives are discussed with relevant contextual information for each region. Additionally, the two initiatives are compared and contrasted in terms of governance, legitimacy, structure, and goals of each. The chapter concludes with an analysis of each case with regard to relevant regional theory.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and its attempts to harmonise higher education through the 1997 Education and Training Protocol. Background information about the organisation is provided as well as a discussion of the goals set forth in the SADC treaty. Critiques and challenges to the organisation and its education initiatives are discussed followed by a discussion of the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) as an alternative to facilitating cooperation in higher education in southern Africa. Finally, the chapter closes by linking this southern African case with relevant regional theory.

Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the three regions and suggests reasons for the success in the European and South American cases as opposed to the southern African case, which has not made many advancements on its stated goals. The analysis links with relevant regional theory and provides discussion of the strengths and limits of current attempts to regionalise higher education as discussed in the various case studies. Recommendations are given for regional higher education initiatives as well as for the specific southern African case. Final conclusions close this chapter and the thesis.

## CHAPTER 2 – THE COMPLEX LANDSCAPE OF REGIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The debates surrounding regionalisation and internationalisation of higher education require recognition of the complexities of the current international system. This chapter does not seek to detail every contributing factor, but rather to provide a foundation from which one can seek to understand the various regional attempts to harmonise higher education. This chapter begins with a discussion of the terms “globalisation”, “internationalisation”, and “regionalisation” to show their links with one another as processes, and differentiate the terms for the reader. Then, the chapter turns to specific pressures and tensions inherent in regional higher education initiatives. The tensions between centralisation and autonomy as well as between competition and cooperation are discussed while including recognition of the university as an actor and the growing emphasis on the knowledge economy, which adds pressure and expectation to regional efforts.

This chapter aims to contextualise the trends and pressures of regional higher education initiatives broadly. Following this chapter, several case studies will further illuminate the concepts discussed in this chapter.

### 2.1 INTERNATIONAL TRENDS

#### *2.1.1 GLOBALISATION, INTERNATIONALISATION, AND REGIONALISATION*

The terms globalisation, internationalisation, and regionalisation must be considered and differentiated in order to understand their effects on higher education. These various concepts are often used to discuss trends in higher education governance, but are not always clearly defined or differentiated. This section aims to clarify these concepts for use in this study.

With regard to the increased interest in regionalisation, it is important to consider the relationship between regionalisation and globalisation. First of all, the impact of globalisation has been uneven.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, the outcomes of regionalisation and globalisation should be approached from

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<sup>30</sup> Marchand, M. Boas, M., and Shaw, T. 1999. The Political Economy of New Regionalisms. *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 20, No. 5: 897-910.

a perspective of diversity rather than similarity. It has long been an approach for scholars to apply and compare regional experiences from Europe to Africa without consideration of the vast differences between these areas. This present study, therefore, takes as its foundation the fundamental differences between Africa and other parts of the world. The thesis will use other regional approaches to draw suggestions for southern Africa, but not to simply compare approaches or experiences. Additionally, Breslin et al. note the importance of expanding the scholarship about regionalism beyond North America and Europe to incorporate the subfields of area studies with regionalism.<sup>31</sup> This research hopes to make an addition to scholarship about diverse regions and comparative regionalism.

The trends and pressures of globalisation have resulted in responses of internationalisation and various forms of regionalisation. This review of literature now turns to differentiate these terms and relate them specifically to the issue of higher education.

### *Globalisation*

The scholarship about globalisation contains a great deal of debate as to its beginning and to whether or not it is a new phenomenon.<sup>32</sup> Although infinitely complex in scope and magnitude, globalisation as a concept and process has irrevocably impacted the global community and its functions. This research is less concerned with defining the specific concept of globalisation and is more interested in the ways that the increasing interconnectedness and market forces of the current global structure, often connected with globalisation, have affected regional communities and higher education.

Altbach and Knight differentiate the terms globalisation and internationalisation in order to explain the trends in higher education. Globalisation, they suggest, refers to the global economic, political, and societal trends and pressures that have largely developed in a contemporary context.

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<sup>31</sup> Breslin, S., Hughes, C., Phillips, N., and Rosamond, B (eds.). 2002. *New Regionalisms in the Global Political Economy: Theories and Cases*. London and New York: Routledge.

<sup>32</sup> Goldin, I. And Reinert, K. 2006. *Globalization for Development: Trade, Finance, Aid, Migration, and Policy*. Washington DC: The World Bank and New York: Palgrave MacMillan.; Castells, M. 2004. *The Network Society*. Northampton: Edward Elgar.; Friedman, T. The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. ; Robertson, S, Novelli, M., Dale, R., Tikly, L., Dachi, H., and Alphonse, N.. 2007. Globalisation, Education and Development: Ideas, Actors, and Dynamics. *Education Papers* No. 68. Department for International Development.; Dale, R. and Robertson, S.L. 2002. The varying effects of regional organisations as subjects of globalisation or education. *Comparative Education Review*. Vol. 46, No. 1: 10-36.



Globalisation has resulted in the concentration of capital in terms of wealth, knowledge, and power. Scott argues that globalisation “is either agnostic about, or positively hostile to, nation states”, whereas internationalisation requires the existence of nation-states.<sup>33</sup> Globalisation is concerned with consumerism and capitalism, while internationalisation is expressed through diplomacy and culture. Enders suggests that globalisation refers to the processes that encourage interdependences and convergence of economies. He argues that this process has a strong cultural component. Dale and Robertson argue that globalisation affects education because of the ways in which it shapes systems and structures that lead to educational reform.<sup>34</sup> Dale and Robertson also suggest that globalisation is not “an inevitable, irresistible, ineluctable force over which no one has any control and that we have to put up with”, but it is a set of forces that were put into motion intentionally.<sup>35</sup> They suggest, rather, that globalisation is a constructed process, which various actors contribute to and continue to perpetuate.

Globalisation also affects the nation-state and market forces, which ultimately influence the societal structures that are responsible for higher education. In short, globalisation refers to the trends in the global economy that provide pressure for states and various actors to seek internationalisation of activities. Globalisation is marked by an increase in multilateral agreements and interactions.

Vaira identifies two main interpretations of globalisation's impact on higher education: convergence and divergence.<sup>36</sup> These ideas concern the extent to which higher education either continues to become more similar or autonomously seeks to respond to the pressures of globalisation. The convergence thesis suggests a linear and often deterministic progression toward a common end, whereas the divergence thesis suggests a more heterogeneous interpretation of the effects of and the responses to globalisation. Divergence, he claims, leads to notions of localisation which increase heterogeneity within and between states. Vaira uses this dichotomy to show the current trend of analysing this issue from two levels, through institutionalism in addressing the macro-level pressures and strategic and translation approaches to understand local-level responses. He problematises each of these approaches and suggests an alternative approach for understanding the changing dynamics in which organisational change must be considered within

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<sup>33</sup> Scott, P. 2000. Globalisation and Higher Education: Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. *Journal of Studies in International Education* Vol. 4:3-10. p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Dale, R. and Robertson, S.L. 2002. The varying effects of regional organisations as subjects of globalisation or education. *Comparative Education Review*. Vol. 46, No. 1: 10-36

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 11.

<sup>36</sup> Vaira, M. 2004. Globalization and higher education organizational change: A framework for analysis. *Higher Education* Vol. 48: 483-510.

the wider institutional structure. In this way, he combines both approaches into one. From this analysis, we can understand the two schools of thought about globalisation's effect on higher education and the importance of considering both levels as well as the relationship between each level. The focus on regional higher education approaches implies a more convergent trend within regions, but this does not necessarily follow to include changes between regions. This thesis seeks to understand the regional objectives to converge in terms of higher education governance and accreditation at the regional level.

Globalisation differs from internationalisation in that the latter often refers to responses to the trends of globalisation.

### *Internationalisation*

Internationalisation refers more to the policies and agreements that states and other actors use as responses to the pressures of globalisation. Altbach and Knight view internationalisation as a response to the pressures of the globalised world in which policies and practices in higher education increasingly cross borders. Enders sees internationalisation as a process of greater cooperation between states and cross-border initiatives.

There are various motivations for internationalising in the field of higher education. Aigner et al. argue that security, economic competitiveness, and improving understanding across cultures and national boundaries are the three primary reasons for internationalising higher education.<sup>37</sup>

It is also important to note that various actors can internationalise and make decisions to internationalise. Internationalisation can be state-led, market-driven, or facilitated by non-state actors. The decision-makers in this case depend particularly on which area of society is internationalising, at this point it is useful to focus on the internationalisation of higher education.

### *Internationalisation of Higher Education*

The internationalisation of higher education challenges traditional theoretical approaches.<sup>38</sup> Although higher education policy is still shaped largely at a national level, the nation state is increasingly challenged as the key focal point of decision-making in higher education policy.

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<sup>37</sup> Aigner, J.S., Nelson, P., & Stimpfl, J. R. 1992. *Internationalizing the University: making it work*. Springfield: CBIS Federal.

<sup>38</sup> Enders, J. 2004. Higher education, internationalization, and the nation-state: Recent developments and challenges to governance theory. *Higher Education* Vol. 47: 361-382.

Internationalisation of education has taken many forms including bilateral, regional, and potentially global arrangements. This study focuses specifically on regional arrangements in higher education.

The global emphasis on knowledge has lent itself to a focus on knowledge infrastructure, education, and institutions of higher learning. There are a variety of motivations for internationalisation in higher education including commercial advantage, the development of knowledge, and improving international cooperation and collaboration.<sup>39</sup> Internationalisation in higher education has led to initiatives such as branch campuses, cross-border collaboration, international student programmes, and English-medium programmes from the universities themselves. Altbach and Knight specifically focus on the internationalisation of higher education as an institution in response to the growing interconnectedness of various countries and cultures, as a result of globalisation. The motivations of the institutions themselves are not necessarily the same motivations that state actors and regional bodies consider in their policies. In addition to universities and state actors, it is also important to note the motivations and obligations of various actors in the internationalisation process. Whether universities are private or public and various motivations at the governmental and non-governmental levels influence the priorities at each level of decision-making and policy formulation.

The internationalisation of discussion and policy regarding higher education requires considering whether higher education is in itself a commodity to be traded or a public good in itself.<sup>40</sup> Many policies see higher education as a public good, which calls to question the idea of who constitutes the public that will benefit from such policies. Additionally, one is forced to consider that if education is a commodity to be traded, then who should regulate the transactions. These are but a few of the questions that this issue poses to policymakers and scholars. These discussions require critical scrutiny and analysis of several related issues.

There are a variety of approaches to understanding the activities of internationalisation of higher education; they can be divided into a typology of approaches including: activity, competency, ethos, and process approaches.<sup>41</sup> The *activity* approach focuses on activities including curriculum, personnel exchange, and technical assistance. The *competency* approach focuses on skills development. The *ethos* approach is concerned with cultural elements of international initiatives.

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<sup>39</sup> Altbach, P. and Knight, J. 2007. The Internationalization of Higher Education: Motivations and Realities. *Journal of Studies in International Education* Vol. 11: 290-305.

<sup>40</sup> Altbach, P. and Knight, J. 2007.

<sup>41</sup> Qiang, Z. 2003. Internationalization of Higher Education: towards a conceptual framework. *Policy Futures in Education* Vol. 1, no. 2: 248-270.

The *process* approach focuses on the integration of elements of teaching, research, and service. The multitude of scholarly approaches to understanding the internationalisation of higher education reflects the complex and diverse reality of this practice in various parts of the world.

Scholars suggest that the internationalising trends in higher education are unlikely to decrease in future years, but several factors may affect the pace of internationalisation, such as: security concerns, government policies and cost of study, increased local capacity, online learning options, private sector involvement, quality assurance mechanisms, and changes in European policies of inclusion and exclusion of non-European students.<sup>42</sup>

### *Regionalisation and Regionalism*

Scholars of regionalism and regionalisation have varying opinions about the goals of regional arrangements, as discussed in the theory section in the previous chapter. The terms regionalism and regionalisation are debated within the literature and are sometimes used interchangeably, but other times used to refer to very different concepts.<sup>43</sup> This thesis does not seek to highlight the intricacies of this debate, but to understand the pressures in regional organisations to respond to globalisation. Hettne and Soderbaum define regionalisation as “the (empirical) process that leads to patterns of cooperation, integration, complementarity and convergence within a particular cross-national geographical space”.<sup>44</sup> The literature differentiates the concept of regionalism as a state-led endeavour, whereas regionalisation can refer to processes above and below the state. The concept of regionalisation, for this study, refers to the efforts by a group of states or non-state actors in geographic or ideological proximity to improve their economic and political relationships in order to efficiently respond to global pressures or mutually beneficial interests. This thesis specifically analyses regions within geographic proximity.

Dale and Robertson point out that regions both contribute to and are affected by globalisation. They also argue that regions are the “deliberate creation of national governments”.<sup>45</sup> Asante argues that regionalisation is necessary for the countries of Africa to effectively combat the marginalisation caused by globalisation. Small populations, small internal markets, fragmentation, artificially imposed borders, and weak infrastructure are all proposed as reasons for the weakness of

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<sup>42</sup> Altbach, P. and Knight, J. 2007.

<sup>43</sup> Breslin, et al.

<sup>44</sup> Hettne, B. And Soderbaum, F. 2002. Theorising the rise of regionness in Breslin, S., Hughes, C., Phillips, N., and Rosamond, B (eds.). *New Regionalisms in the Global Political Economy: Theories and Cases*. London and New York: Routledge.

<sup>45</sup> Dale, R. and Roberston, S.L. 2002. p. 15.

individual African economies and justification to support integration as a means to improve international competitiveness.<sup>46</sup> The fragmentation of Africa has created an environment in which few African countries can effectively industrialise on their own because of scarce resources and small market size. Furthermore, without “access to a larger market area that could be created by measures of economic integration, it is impossible to see how the economies of these small countries could be developed and diversified”.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, economies of scale offered through regionalisation create potential for African countries to overcome marginalisation through regionalisation. This argument also follows to include the topic of higher education as small market size and limited resources at the national level can be resolved by integration at the regional level.

Additionally, Stephan et al. use two-level game theory to understand Africa’s precarious place in the international system.<sup>48</sup> Putnam’s two-level game theory describes the complexity of international and domestic-level obligations and the resulting difficulty of international decision-making. The theory proposes understanding decision-making by recognising two levels, one where the national and domestic level actors influence policymakers and another where the international relationships, obligations, and negotiations influence a state’s decision-making in the international sphere. The interconnectedness of this decision-making is important to note as “any key player at the international table who is dissatisfied with the outcome may upset the game board, and conversely, any leader who fails to satisfy his fellow players at the domestic table risks being evicted from his seat”.<sup>49</sup> Stephan argues that the international level for Africa is “constrained by globalisation, the realities of inadequate investment flows, adverse trading regimes, and the legacy of colonialism”, while the national agenda is monopolised by the competing interests of business and labour.<sup>50</sup> This difficult situation, Stephan argues, can be addressed through regional integration in Southern Africa.

Tensions exist with regard to regionalisation of higher education in that on one hand, regionalisation of higher education can be seen as part of the internationalisation process because it encourages regional cooperation “at all levels: between national and sub-national governments, between sectors and institutions of higher education across the region, and even region-wide

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<sup>46</sup> Asante. S.K.B. 1997. *Regionalisation and Africa’s Development: Expectations, Reality, and Challenges*, Ch. 2. London: Macmillan.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>48</sup> Stephan, H, Power, M, Hervey, A, and Fonseca, R. 2006. *The Scramble for Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A View from the South*. Cape Town: Renaissance Press.

<sup>49</sup> Putnam, R. 1988. Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games. *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No.3:434.

<sup>50</sup> Stephan, et al., 227.

collaboration among corresponding units within universities and colleges".<sup>51</sup> While on the other hand, regionalisation in higher education is arguably part of the globalisation process in which regional partners cooperate in order to counteract global pressures. Regionalisation, then, can be seen as either a result of globalisation or a response to globalisation. Some argue that regional structures allow power relations to be more balanced<sup>52</sup> than the global community, while others suggest that regional structures further exploit the least developed Member states.

Regional projects include those that seek to increase recognition of degrees and diplomas to those that seek to improve quality standards within a region, to the most comprehensive which seek to harmonise policies and create common areas of higher education<sup>53</sup>. The MERCOSUR and Bologna projects in their respective regions are two of the most advanced, while more tentative arrangements include those in the Southern African Development Community and the initiatives of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization.

It is also important to note that discussions of regionalism and regionalisation often tend to use the European experience as a goal rather than a learning tool. The characterisation of other regions in comparison as informal or less developed assumes a prejudice in favour of the European model.<sup>54</sup> Learning from this knowledge, the present study seeks to be informed by the European case rather than use it as an end-point or goal for all regional higher education initiatives. This study also recognises the diversity of experiences and unique situation of developing countries in the international system.

The challenges posed by the trends of internationalisation, globalisation, and regionalisation and pressures of the knowledge economy come at a critical time for developing countries. These countries generally fall into a post-colonial context in which they are currently creating and clarifying a national identity<sup>55</sup>, which conflicts with the global trends of de-nationalisation inherent in globalisation and regionalisation. The global pressures threaten developing countries who are working to establish an identity.

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<sup>51</sup> Enders, J. 2004. p. 368.

<sup>52</sup> Verger, A., and Herme, J.P. 2010.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Breslin, et al.

<sup>55</sup> Moja, T. and Cloete, N. 2001. Vanishing borders and new boundaries, in Muller, J., Cloete, N., and Badat, S. (eds.). *Challenges of Globalisation. South African Debates with Manuel Castells*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Not only are developing countries' contexts important to consider, but the cultural, social, and economic context of all countries and regions are important to consider when analysing regional higher education initiatives. The goals of various actors in these arrangements are diverse and it is important to recognise that not all regions or countries are affected in the same way by these arrangements.

Additionally, the variety of actors involved in the discussion and debate about regional initiatives in higher education requires some consideration. The pressures on the state level of government to seek national interest while promoting regional objectives presents tension at that level. The multiplicity of non-governmental actors also complicates the landscape.

Universities require particular consideration as they are influenced by and uniquely impact the debates about regional collaboration in higher education.

#### *Universities as actors*

Universities are “multi-purpose or multi-product institutions which contribute to the generation and transmission of ideology, the selection and formulation of elites, the social development and educational upgrading of societies, the production and application of knowledge and the training of the highly skilled labour force”.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, they are important political actors and need consideration in a discussion about structural attempts to harmonise higher education as well as their inevitable influence in the growing global knowledge economy.

There is also debate as to whether universities are international institutions in themselves in terms of scope and influence or whether they are increasingly becoming more international. The university, since ancient times, has been a meeting place for intellectuals from diverse areas and has held a more cosmopolitan position relative to other institutions in society.<sup>57</sup> However, this international component is contrasted with the more recent role universities have played in the development of national identity and their support by the state. Universities also hold a precarious position by being funded by states while challenging purely national-level objectives with their often international scope. It is also important to note that universities have as varied histories and traditions as the states in which they operate.

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<sup>56</sup> Enders, J. 2004 p. 362.

<sup>57</sup> Arbo, P, and Benneworth, P. 2007. “Understanding the Regional Contribution of Higher Education Institutions: A Literature Review.” *OECD Education Working Papers, No. 9*. OECD Publishing.

The Humboldtian notion of the university has also been challenged by contemporary market forces and global pressures to harmonise. This view sees the university as “an autonomous body of self-governing professionals, accountable to and monitored by itself”.<sup>58</sup> The university, in this sense, was, or should be, interested in knowledge for its own sake, not as a means to an economic end. The challenge of this goal is made through market forces and the new consumers of higher education whose interests lie more in the result of their education rather in the education itself. Additionally, teaching and research as core goals and functions of the university are increasingly at odds with each other in the current system. The university is being challenged to train workers for the needs of the market and produce research for the state as a public good and private donors for commercial benefit.<sup>59</sup> The transition from self-governance and accountability to state or regionally driven accountability poses challenges to the higher education sector. The increase focus on quality has also led to reform in order to increase efficiency and accountability, which in turn leads to competition between universities level and the development of quasi-market mechanisms to regulate higher education.<sup>60</sup>

Universities are not the primary focus for this study, but do play a prominent role in the discussion about the global trends in higher education. They are not only affected by, but also influence the processes of globalisation, internationalisation, and regionalisation. As knowledge becomes the focal point of the global economy, knowledge generating institutions will gain greater influence.

The pressures facing the university are also linked to the tensions between centralisation and autonomy and between competition and cooperation.

## 2.2 TENSIONS AND INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES

The discussion of globalisation, internationalisation, and regionalisation of higher education lends itself to the debate between centralisation and autonomy of higher education institutions and policies. There are many factors in this debate to consider including issues of sovereignty, cultural sensitivity, and respect for diversity, as well as issues regarding transferability of credit, mobility of

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<sup>58</sup> Baert, P. and Shipman, A. 2005. University Under Siege? Trust and accountability in the contemporary academy. *European Societies* Vol. 7, No. 1: 159.

<sup>59</sup> Baert, P. and Shipman, A. 2005.

<sup>60</sup> Arbo, P. and Benneworth, P. 2007.; Baert, P. and Shipman, A. 2005.



labour, and standardised certification. The tensions on either side of this argument have particular interests and strong support for their various positions.

On the one hand are the voices supporting harmonisation, convertability of credit, and student and labour mobility, which processes of convergence improve. On the other hand, there are the issues of sovereignty and autonomy on a national and local level in addition to the traditions of individual institutions. The following sections outline some of the important voices and ideas in these debates as well as contextualise them for the particular case studies that follow this chapter.

## 2.3 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES AND CONTEMPORARY THEORY

The governance structures of various regional arrangements differ in terms of their implementation structures and commitments from members. In the case of the European Union (which is not the coordinator of the Bologna Process, but influences its trajectory), there is a centralised supra-national organisation. Other regional arrangements, such as the MERCOSUR-Educativo project are agreements at the regional level which are left to the individual states to implement.

Additionally, traditional understandings of governance theory are challenged in debates about regional higher education initiatives.<sup>61</sup> The European example especially challenges traditional norms as it continues to develop.

Deficits in current theory exist in the “concentration on the single nation state (even where international comparisons are made)”, “concentration on policy effects on the changing relationship between the state and higher education organisations, and the internal governance of higher education institutions, neglecting the input side of policy formation”, and the “concern with macro level policy-making and the meso level organisational adaptation, neglecting to some extent the micro dynamics and effects in the actual practices and performances of academic work”.<sup>62</sup>

Enders suggests several alternative approaches to studying governance, particularly as it relates to the European case. Of these, he suggests a typology including analysing “intergovernmental negotiations” where “national policies are coordinated by agreements at the European level, but national governments try to remain in full control of the decision process”.<sup>63</sup> The Bologna Process

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<sup>61</sup> Enders, 2004.

<sup>62</sup> Enders. 2004, p. 373.

<sup>63</sup> Enders. 2004. p. 374.

falls in such a governance form because it is a voluntary process that does not have legal consequences for defaulting. Another approach may be called “joint decisions” where a supra-national authority is responsible for decision-making. Recalling the regional theory discussion, these can perhaps be linked to regional cooperation and steps toward integration respectively.

Hettne uses three components to understand the territorial orders, or sets of relationships between places, of regional spaces: structure, governance and legitimacy. ‘Structure’ refers to the ways in which the contributing units are interrelated. ‘Governance’ refers to the ways in which decisions are made and coordinated. ‘Legitimacy’ denotes the extent to which the populace views the structure and governance as legitimate.<sup>64</sup> Some scholars argue that governance and legitimacy are easier on a regional scale because of proximity, culture, and decision-making structures.<sup>65</sup> Legitimacy, or the foundation that allows the system to be acceptable to its members, is more accessible in a regional initiative because of the likelihood that agreements are formed voluntarily rather than through pressure from the global sphere. These variables are used in discussion and analysis of the particular case studies in the following chapters of this research.

There have been many suggestions for the goals of regional higher education initiatives and these are often used interchangeably, often to the detriment of the clarity of the initial goals themselves. The words ‘harmonisation’, ‘convertibility’, and ‘convergence’ are used in various scholarship and regional protocols almost interchangeably to refer to goals of higher education arrangements. Recognising this, there are potential governance implications for the use and interchangeable nature of various concepts within this discourse. This study does not seek to take up a discourse analysis, but notes the importance of language in these debates.

Regional organisations tend to begin with more narrow economic goals than higher education initiatives. Regional goals tend to begin with specific economic and trade-related goals, but have developed to include such issues as education because of its inextricable link to labour, trade, and economic success of states. An interesting field for further discussion is the extent to which the regional organizations themselves influence the education of various countries for the region’s response to the economy rather than the individual countries affecting the regional policies.

Although contemporary scholarship and theory about governance, particularly on the regional level, are challenged by regional higher education initiatives, Jayasuriya and Robertson provide an

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<sup>64</sup> Hettne, B. 2005. Beyond the ‘New’ Regionalism. *New Political Economy* Vol. 10, No. 4: 543-571.

<sup>65</sup> Verger, A., and Herme, J.P. 2010.

alternative tool for understanding the regional dynamics involved in higher education arrangements at the regional level.

## 2.4 REGULATORY REGIONALISM AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMUNITIES

Jayasuriya progresses the theory about higher education governance through a discussion of regulatory regionalism and accountability communities. Ultimately, Jayasuriya argues that the new relationship between regionalisation of higher education and the transformation of the public university creates new spaces in governance, which are not above the state, but are located in regional spaces of the state. The regional spaces within the state overlap with national, political and policy-making regimes.<sup>66</sup> The argument follows that regional governance does not mean a submitting of all functions to a higher regional level, but instead a regionalisation of governance within a state through the regulations at the regional level. .

‘Accountability communities’ can be understood as an institutional arrangement that unites a diverse group of public and private actors “around specific practices and ideas of accountability that hold to ‘account’ the conduct of agents within a regulatory regime”.<sup>67</sup> Accountability communities have the authority to define the legitimacy of a regulatory regime. Within regional regulatory regimes, accountability communities have the ability of legitimising the public authority exercised in regional arrangements. Accountability communities also have the scope to operate within and beyond national boundaries in order to perform legislative, monitoring and compliance activities. They are “vehicles of political governance that fundamentally shape the nature of public authority and citizenship”<sup>68</sup>.

Jayasuriya asserts that there are at times contradictory relationships between globalisation and regionalisation of higher education and that the regulatory framework that affects the development of regional higher education arrangements must be considered.

Furthermore, the issue of accountability is of particular importance to regional higher education arrangements in that “accountability is a political process that reframes what constitutes the

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<sup>66</sup> Jayasuriya, K. 2010. Learning by the market: regulatory regionalism, Bologna, and accountability communities. *Globalisation, Societies, and Education* Vol. 8, No. 1:7-22.

<sup>67</sup> Jayasuriya. 2010. P 8.

<sup>68</sup> Jayasuriya, K. 2010. p19.

boundaries of citizenship within systems of higher education”<sup>69</sup>. Accountability is an important component of regional arrangements, particularly those with no supra-national enforcement mechanism. This function essentially falls to the accountability community. An accountability community is also responsible for the social component of the regional space within the state.

As Jayasuriya points out the issue of citizenship is once again at the centre of debates about higher education governance in that the European case considers education to be a public good to which public resources are devoted. When public resources are utilized, the issue of who benefits from these resources becomes increasingly important. The accountability communities in this case are responsible for maintaining legitimacy and determining who gets to be involved and to what degree in these arrangements.

This new perspective on regional governance provides a link between traditional theoretical perspectives of regional arrangements and contemporary changes within regional communities. It is unclear how this new vein of thought will specifically affect the literature on regionalism and the specific scholarship about regional higher education governance, but it is an important consideration for the purposes of this research. Jayasuriya specifically considers the European case study, but it is also possible to incorporate other regional experiences through this lens, as well. This thesis incorporates this framework as well as the traditional theory into the theoretical analysis of the case studies that follow this chapter.

## 2.5 KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY/KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

The international community has become increasingly interested in the concept of a “knowledge economy” and in growing a “knowledge society”. The increasing focus on knowledge in the global economy puts pressure on higher education institutions and encourages states and regions to focus on higher education as a source for skilled labour and technical innovation. The knowledge economy is discussed in greater detail because of this relationship. This section discusses the various levels of development in the international economy through dynastic structures, competition versus cooperation, and power.

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<sup>69</sup> Jarasuriya, K. 2010. p 13

The change in focus of the drivers of economic progress has also been termed the 'post-industrial' society in which services and information drive economic development as opposed to industrial production.<sup>70</sup> This post-industrial society increases emphasis on service and a skilled labour force and changes the social and political structure of society. The development of the post-industrial society can also be linked with the focus of elites in the professional and technical sectors. Bell wrote about this transition in 1974, but its effects are likely being felt more now than when he penned the idea. The idea of a services and knowledge-driven economy has come to be known as a knowledge economy in today's contemporary discussions of the global economic structure.

The knowledge economy is argued to be the highest level of development that a state can seek in the current economic context. Stephan et al. identify seven dynastic levels of the contemporary global economy, through which national economies progressively rise. The first dynasty involves exploiting land for commercial benefit, second dynasty involves factory skilled labour, the third dynasty involves heavy machinery, the fourth includes mass production, the fifth incorporates marketing and branding, and the sixth dynasty incorporates mass computerisation and information technology to produce cost-effective solutions. The seventh, and highest, level is the knowledge-based economy where knowledge is the main source of wealth creation in society.<sup>71</sup> The theory does not suggest another level beyond the knowledge economy as it is currently the highest level attainable by any national or regional economy.

The World Bank asserts that "the application of knowledge – as manifested in entrepreneurship and innovation, research and development, and software and product design – is one of the key sources of growth in the global economy".<sup>72</sup> The World Bank Institute has developed an assessment index for knowledge economies and for knowledge resources in a country. The resulting report asserts that the four pillars of the knowledge economy are economic and institutional regime, education and skills, information and communication infrastructure, and innovation system<sup>73</sup>. The World Bank study revealed a strong correlation between the accumulation of knowledge and levels of economic development. This correlation, however, does not prove causation and could easily lend credibility to the argument that high-income countries are better able to afford more significant investments in knowledge accumulation. Indeed, the "correlation, by itself does not

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<sup>70</sup> Bell, D. 1974. *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: a Venture in Social Forecasting*. London: Heinemann.

<sup>71</sup> Stephan, et al. 2006.

<sup>72</sup> World Bank Institute. 2008. *Measuring Knowledge in the World's Economies: Knowledge Assessment Methodology and Knowledge Economy Index*. Knowledge for Development. p 1.

<sup>73</sup> World Bank Institute. 2008.

permit us to predict with any degree of certainty that building up certain forms of knowledge in a poor country will be sure to produce economic growth anytime soon".<sup>74</sup>

Within the literature about the knowledge economy, there is also some dissent in definitions and adherence to the progressive nature of economic development.<sup>75</sup> Lundvall and Johnson differentiate various types of knowledge and provides four types of knowledge: know-what, know-why, know-how, and know-who.<sup>76</sup> Know-what refers to facts, know-why refers to principles and laws of nature or processes, know-how refers to skills and capabilities, and know-who refers to social capital and abilities to build relationships. The differentiation in knowledge types poses the question of exactly what type of knowledge is being pursued and in what ways. Zidonis argues that a formal institutional framework does not guarantee the development of a knowledge society. In understanding the attempts to regionalise higher education in the following chapters, the overall goal of what sort of knowledge should be attained in each is not as explicitly explored. An analysis of what types of knowledge are being pursued by each regional organisation could provide an interesting study in the future.

Understanding the global trend toward the knowledge economy as well as the regional focus of higher education initiatives, it is currently unclear as to whether these initiatives have a clear goal of improving cooperation within regions for its own sake or to encourage competition between regions. These initiatives appear to have conflicting goals in terms of cooperation and competition. Scholars and policymakers seem to approach the goals of regional higher education initiatives from contradictory perspectives, which in turn creates ambiguity in goals and implementation.

Within this context of cooperation versus competition, interests within regions also appear to be at odds. Social and cultural goals are likely to be accomplished through cooperation while economic objectives are likely to seek competitive advantage for the region, or an individual nation state. This has posed problems in Europe where the research agenda is separate from the higher education agenda at the regional level. Given challenges to the state, universities, and pressures of the global economy, it is important to consider the strengths and weaknesses of current regional initiatives in order to inform future attempts.

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<sup>74</sup> World Bank Institute. 2008. Measuring Knowledge in the World's Economies: Knowledge Assessment Methodology and Knowledge Economy Index. Knowledge For Development. P. 8.

<sup>75</sup> Zidonis, Z. 2009. Measuring Knowledge Economy: Towards an institutional approach. *Public Policy and Administration* Vol. 30: 92-101.

<sup>76</sup> Lundvall, B., and Johnson, B. 1994. The Learning Economy. *Journal of Industry Studies* Vol. 1, No. 2: 23-42.

In connection with the goal of increasing competition, these regional objectives can also be seen as attempts to attain or increase power in the international system. Susan Strange identifies four pillars to structural power in the international system: security, production, finance, and knowledge.<sup>77</sup> These pillars are interrelated in many ways, but also serve to support one another. The pillar that is particularly under scrutiny in this paper is knowledge. Knowledge and its development through higher education are discussed as regional objectives in the case studies that follow this chapter. Strange argues that “knowledge is power, and whoever is able to develop or acquire a kind of knowledge that is sought by others, and whoever can control the channels by which it is communicated and the access to stores of knowledge, is able to dominate”.<sup>78</sup> Strange specifically refers to the United States in her analysis of knowledge as a pillar of power in the international system, but she gives three factors that have contributed to the United States’ leadership in this area. She identifies the uniform laws and regulations that standardise learning and performance, large defense budget, and the size and wealth of American universities.<sup>79</sup> It may be true that developing countries cannot meet the latter two criteria, but regional organisations are working toward standardising policies and performance in an effort to develop the higher education infrastructure. The goal is not necessarily to become a leader in the world, but a participant and peer in the knowledge economy. Strange’s recognition of the United States’ success in this area also provides an incentive to the rest of the world to standardise learning and focus on developing universities as a tool to attain power in the global knowledge economy.

The widespread nature of the notions of power and knowledge in the global economy reveal the extent of the influence of globalisation. The world is increasingly becoming more interconnected and the ways in which countries and regions respond to these trends has tremendous and long-lasting influence on their positions in the world economy.

The discussion of the knowledge economy has revealed the increasing importance of knowledge in the contemporary global economy. This discussion, however, is not without controversy especially in terms of the nexus between cooperation and competition and the immense diversity of forms of knowledge in the international system. It is also important to consider that the pressures of the knowledge economy do not uniformly affect all regions of the world.

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<sup>77</sup>Strange, S. 1987. The Persistent Myth of Lost Hegemony. *International Organization* Vol. 41, no. 4.

<sup>78</sup>Strange, S. 1987. The Persistent Myth of Lost Hegemony. *International Organization* Vol. 41, no. 4: 570.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

It is clear from this review of literature that globalisation and the growing knowledge economy are affecting higher education and regional arrangements. These pressures have uniquely affected various regional communities and the specific influence will be discussed and analyzed in the following chapters with three specific case studies. Also evident are the complicated relationships between competitiveness and cooperation in regional higher education arrangements. The issues of mobility and citizenship are also complicated by these arrangements.

It is also important to note the potential implications of regional higher education projects. Particularly with regard to already powerful regions, such as Europe, increasing their compatibility and expanding to other regions creates the potential for a monopoly in higher education based on the European model.<sup>80</sup> The Bologna Process has opened itself to observers from other countries, which has far-reaching implications for higher education globally. Again, the idea that Europe is increasing compatibility and cooperation for more reasons than mobility within its region has impact on other areas of the world. Additionally, the question of whether the main goal of these relationships is cooperative or to increase competitiveness with the rest of the world comes to the fore.

With a greater understanding of the global pressures and trends in regional higher education governance, this study now turns to two case studies to further understand the strengths and weaknesses of regional higher education initiatives.

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<sup>80</sup> Robertson, S. 2010.



## CHAPTER 3 - INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This chapter outlines two specific case studies of regional higher education projects with the goal of determining strengths and weaknesses of the projects and developing a contextual foundation for analysing the case of Southern Africa in the following chapter.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the Bologna Process in Europe with consideration of the goals of the process, foundations, and implications. Then, it turns to the MERCOSUR-Educativo project in South America. The chapter concludes the discussion with a synthesis, analysis, and critique of both case studies and linking the two experiences with regional theory.

### 3.1 THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

#### 3.1.1 FORMATION

The Bologna Process is a name given to the agreement between 29 European countries' ministers of education and officials on 19 June 1999 in Bologna, which provided the foundation to the European Higher Education Area. The Bologna Process is not a European Union initiative, but was initiated by the Council of Europe. The European Union and its various organs are contributors to and partners of the Bologna Process, but the legal framework and organisational structure are not dictated by the European Union. The Bologna Process currently has 47 partners who are party to the European Cultural Convention, while the European Union has 27 Member States.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> As of November 2011, the participating member countries are: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, and United Kingdom. The European Commission has additional member status, The Consultative Members are: the Council of Europe, UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education, European University Association, European Association of Institutions in Higher Education, European Students' Union, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, Education International Pan-European Structure, and BUSINESSEUROPE.

The primary objectives of the Bologna Declaration are:

1. The “adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees”, based on “two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate”
2. Establishment “of a system of credits – such as the ECTS<sup>82</sup> system – as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility”
3. “Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement” for teachers and students
4. “Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies”; and
5. “Promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research”<sup>83</sup>.

The original document and agreement had a fairly limited and concrete set of goals. The following iterations and subsequent agreements, however, extended these aims. The additions to the Bologna Declaration were made in Prague in 2001, Berlin in 2003, Bergen in 2005, London in 2007, and Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve in 2009. More discussion of the changes made by subsequent iterations follows the brief contextual history of the Bologna Declaration.

Although non-governmental actors do not have the same rights as states under the Bologna Process, they do have the authority to shape policies and frame various objectives. States are the only entities allowed to make political decisions under the agreement. In this initiative, universities have also undertaken responsibility to ensure the implementation of the agreement. More than 175 universities in Europe have agreed to the process and begun implementation.<sup>84</sup>

### 3.1.2 FOUNDATIONS FOR BOLOGNA

The Bologna Declaration had a strong foundation prior to its passage in 1999. The economic foundation of the current market integration in Europe began with the founding of the European

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<sup>82</sup> European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

<sup>83</sup> Bologna Declaration. 1999. *The European Higher Education Area: Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education*. Bologna, Italy.

<sup>84</sup> Verger.

Coal and Steel community by the Treaty of Paris in 1951. Since this economic relationship united six European countries, the continent has progressively taken steps to integrate additional facets of the economic and social fabric. Education falls uniquely between several categories of society including the economy, social issues, culture, security concerns, and labour mobility. As noted above, the Bologna Process is not a project of the European Union, but is perhaps made more possible by the 'regionness' developed as a result of the regional integration of the European Union.

The European case of regional integration has led to the creation, development and challenging of theoretical approaches to understanding regional arrangements. Of the theoretical approaches discussed in Chapter 1, the European arrangement is most closely understood through the lens of market integration. It has followed a progressive process from establishing a free trade area to complete integration through the European Union. Although the signatories of the Bologna Process come from within and outside the EU, the foundations of regional cooperation and integration have laid a framework for additional attempts at regionalisation in Europe.

A year prior to the signing of the Bologna Declaration in 1999, the education ministers of France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom signed the Sorbonne Declaration, which called for "progressive harmonisation of the overall framework of our degrees and cycles".<sup>85</sup> The Sorbonne Declaration effectively laid the foundation for what has become the Bologna Process.

The European Commission had also tried to make inroads into higher education prior to the passing of the Bologna Declaration, but was unsuccessful. Bologna was at first the product of state-led cooperation developed in the Sorbonne Conference of 1998 and excluded the commission. It has since become an intergovernmental process complete with intergovernmental agreements and allowed the commission a partner status of the agreement. The Bologna Process is also unique in its goals relative to previous attempts at reform in that it seeks to transform the curricula and degrees rather than the institutional functions of the national higher education systems themselves.

Integration in higher education in Europe has largely been achieved through consent and negotiations, rather than through threats and force.<sup>86</sup> The economic foundation for further integration, such as in the area of education, does not mean that this transition was either smooth

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<sup>85</sup> Sorbonne Joint Declaration. 1998. Joint declaration on harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system. Paris, France.

<sup>86</sup> Gornitzka, A. 2007. The Lisbon Process: A supranational policy perspective in Maassen, P. and Olsen, J. (eds.) *University Dynamics and European Integration*. Dordrecht: Springer.

or linear. The efforts to influence education and higher education specifically have had deep roots over decades in the European case.

It is important to note that the fields of research and education have historically been closely linked and often combined in most European countries, while at the regional level have been separate policy areas.<sup>87</sup> The integration process of higher education has also incorporated research. The area of research was given a boost by the 2000 Lisbon summit and development of the European Research Council (ERC), which was supported by the European Commission. The European Research Area (ERA) was also established to advance research. These parallel efforts in research and higher education on behalf of the European Commission and Council of Europe, respectively, provided a union for the EHEA and the ERA in 2003 when they converged. The supranational approach of the Lisbon 2000 agenda and the intergovernmental agreement through the Bologna Process have both led to the strengthening of the European integration of higher education.<sup>88</sup> They have also heightened the relevance and importance of this field at the national and regional level.

This case further reveals the influence of various political actors in integration processes. On the one hand, the European Commission could not successfully make inroads into higher education, so focused on research, while the signatories of the Bologna Process identified goals for higher education. These separate fields were developed through their respective agreements and have eventually become complementary.

### 3.1.3 BEYOND BOLOGNA

The European Ministers responsible for higher education met once again in Prague in 2001 to follow up on the original goals set forth in the Bologna Process. The original aims were confirmed, but additional goals were also introduced, which was the first widening of the Bologna process. The idea of a social component of higher education was introduced and resulted in the consideration of higher education as a public good and a public responsibility<sup>89</sup>. The Prague Communiqué asserts that students are full members of the higher education community, as well. Additionally, lifelong learning was given more emphasis in this iteration of objectives. Lifelong learning is argued to be essential in building the knowledge-based society and economy in Europe,

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<sup>87</sup> Amaral, et al. 2009.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Prague Communiqué. 2001. *Towards the European Higher Education Area: Communiqué of the Meeting of European Ministers in Charge of Higher Education*. Prague.; Wachter, B. 2004. The Bologna Process: developments and prospects. *European Journal of Education* Vol. 39, No.3: 265-273.

which will be required to face the challenges of competitiveness and improve social cohesion. Competitiveness and social cohesion are more significantly mentioned in this document, which widens the agenda of the higher education approach in Europe from one of transferrable credits and cooperation to international competitiveness.

A subsequent meeting was held in Berlin in 2003, which widened the agenda further and included 33 participating countries, up from the original 29.<sup>90</sup> The social dimension of the Bologna Process was reaffirmed as well as a focus on balancing the increase in competitiveness with social cohesion and reducing inequalities at the European level. The emphasis on a knowledge-based economy was reiterated. The efforts of Member States, according to the Berlin Communiqué, should preserve Europe's cultural richness and diversity, while enhancing cooperation in higher education and research. The Berlin Communiqué first mentions the relationships with other countries and regions of the world, including European countries not yet party to the Bologna Process and representatives from the European Union, Latin America and Caribbean (EULAC) Common Space for Higher Education. The language of the Berlin Communiqué emphasises comparability, compatibility, and transparency of European higher education institutions. There is recognition of the importance of institutional, national, and regional components of the process to develop the European Higher Education Area. The priorities set for the two years following this meeting were the quality assurance systems, effective use of a two-cycle system, and a recognition system of degrees and periods of studies. The two-cycle system refers to a two level system, which outlines qualifications an undergraduate and Masters-level qualification. In terms of quality assurance, goals for 2005 were set up to include: 1. A definition of responsibilities, 2. Evaluation including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and published results, 3. System of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures, and 4. International participation and cooperation.

A European dimension of higher education is discussed in the Berlin Communiqué, which seeks to establish a European identity and citizenship. Although the language of competition is used less frequently, the Berlin Communiqué does seek to promote the “attractiveness and openness of European higher education” and cooperation with the rest of the world by opening Bologna seminars to representatives of various regions. This reveals an underlying trend to continue to

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<sup>90</sup> Berlin Communiqué. 2003. *Realising the European Higher Education Area: Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Higher Education*. Berlin.

increase competitiveness and potentially export a Bologna-type process to other parts of the world, furthering the reach of Bologna's aims.

The 2005 meeting in Bergen<sup>91</sup> added five new partner countries. A discussion of improving complementarily with the EHEA and the European Union's development of lifelong learning suggests the increasing role being played by the Commission. The Communiqué marks success in the quality assurance system by most countries and that 36 of the 45 participating countries have ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention, a Council of Europe framework to make comparable the recognition of higher education qualifications.<sup>92</sup> The recognition of the need to improve synergy between the EHEA and the ERA is noted. The social dimension is once again discussed as necessary for the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA. Mobility is marked as one of the key objectives of the Bologna Process. The desire to enhance international understanding of the Bologna Process through relationships with other regions is also discussed. The desire to identify partner regions for the Bologna Process is also identified. A new component is identified in the desire to develop a three-cycle degree structure.

The London 2007 meeting noted the full range of purposes of higher education institutions (HEIs) and the desire to provide necessary resources to continue fulfilling these purposes. In the area of mobility, problems are mentioned with regard to insufficient financial incentives, immigration issues, and recognition of degrees as obstacles to ensuring wider mobility within the EHEA. Progress is noted at the advancement of a three-cycle degree system. The Communiqué also underlines "the importance of curricula reform leading to qualifications better suited both to the importance of the labour market and to further study".

The 2009 reconvening of the Ministers of education in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve reaffirmed previous priorities of the process, but added employability, student-centred learning and teaching, transparency tools, and funding to its agenda.<sup>93</sup> The Ministers also encouraged the E4 group to continue cooperating to develop the European dimension of quality assurance. The E4 consists of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), European Students' Union (ESU), European University Association (EUA), and European Association of Institutions of

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<sup>91</sup> Bergen Communiqué. 2005. *The European Higher Education Area – Achieving the Goals*. Bergen, Norway.

<sup>92</sup> Lisbon Recognition Convention. 1997. *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region*. Lisbon, Portugal.

<sup>93</sup> Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué. 2009. *The Bologna Process 2020-The European Higher Education Area in the new decade*. Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.

Higher Education (EURASHE), which comprise the key stakeholders of quality assurance in Europe – quality assurance agencies, students, universities, and other higher education institutions.

The Budapest-Vienna Declaration of 12 March 2010 officially launched the European Higher Education Area and added Kazakhstan to the membership of the process.<sup>94</sup>

As demonstrated by the progression of the Bologna Process over time, the original ideas were widened to the current broad agenda. It also expanded to include additional stakeholders in addition to the original participation by Ministers of Education of the Member States. Even though the Bologna Process was created before the Lisbon agenda and without the participation of the European Commission, the Commission is a key stakeholder in the process and has influenced the pursuit of competitiveness and knowledge in Europe.<sup>95</sup> The desire to create a “Europe of Knowledge” is emphasised through links between the EHEA and the European Research Area (ERA). This progression has also been steered by regional economic objectives and the participation of the EC. The European Union holds subsidiarity<sup>96</sup> as a core principle, but the ambiguity of this principle does not guarantee that final authority with regard to higher education rests in the individual states.<sup>97</sup> Enders suggests that European governance in higher education is challenged at the international level where national policies are coordinated, while the individual governments themselves maintain control in the decision-making process.

The Bologna Declaration aligns the goals of the agreement with the global trend to a knowledge economy in its support for a “Europe of Knowledge” as a means to support social and human growth. Knowledge, it argues, provides the necessary skills for the European citizenry to meet the new and developing challenges in the world today. The knowledge economy is a clear factor as well as the social and cultural component of the singular citizenry. A European identity is clearly being established in which economic and educational priorities align themselves at both the regional and national levels.

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<sup>94</sup> Budapest-Vienna Declaration. 2010. Launch of the European Higher Education Area. Budapest, Hungary and Vienna, Austria.

<sup>95</sup> Robertson, S. 2006. The politics of constructing (a competitive) Europe(an) through internationalising higher education : Strategies, structures, subjects . *Perspectives in Education* Vol. 24, No. 4: 29-44.

<sup>96</sup> Subsidiarity refers to the protection of Member States in the EU from the Union acting in policy fields that it is not legally given the right to act in and the delegating of tasks to the national or local level if they are better dealt with there.

<sup>97</sup> Maassen, P. And Musselin, C. 2009. European Integration and the Europeanisation of Higher Education in Amaral, A., Neave, G, Musselin, C, and Maassen, P (eds). *European Integration and the Governance of Higher Education and Research*. Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London, and New York: Springer.

## 3.2 MERCOSUR-EDUCATIVO

### 3.2.1 FORMATION

The Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR) or Common Market of the South was established by the Treaty of Asuncion in 1991 in order to develop a common market in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay.<sup>98</sup> Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Colombia have also signed additional protocols that allow them access to the organisation as partner states.

Latin American countries have a number of quality concerns in higher education including overcrowding in universities, poor infrastructure, outdated instruction material and curricula. This is compounded by poor learning outcomes in primary and secondary schooling.<sup>99</sup> Although there are a number of hurdles to overcome, Latin American higher education has made progress in recent years including a steady increase in higher education enrolment and developments in quality assurance mechanisms, which will be discussed more below.<sup>100</sup>

MERCOSUR considered the Education Area a priority from its outset and allowed the Meeting of Ministries of Education (MME) to be the forum for decision making for the initiative<sup>101</sup>. The initial objectives were the recognition and accreditation of degree programmes that improved mobility in the region. One of the initial goals of the organisation was the improvement of higher education and education in general. After the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s, public universities “gradually deteriorated due to a lack of resources, while they simultaneously had to deal with the challenge of an increasing demand for higher education” and the private university sector grew at an unprecedented rate with little regulation.<sup>102</sup>

In June 1992, the Triennial Plan for the MERCOSUR Education Area was established by the Meeting of the Ministers of Education of MERCOSUR (MME). The triennial plan was intended to make the education systems of each Member State compatible in order to facilitate movement of students

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<sup>98</sup> MERCOSUR Free Trade Agreement. 1991. Treaty Establishing a Common Market between the Argentine Republic, the Federal Republic of Brazil, the Republic of Paraguay and the Eastern Republic of Uruguay. Asuncion, Paraguay.

<sup>99</sup> Holm-Nielsen, L., Thorn, K., Brunner, J., and Balan, J. 2005. Regional and International Challenges to Higher Education in Latin America in Higher Education in de Wit et al. (eds.) *Latin America: The International Dimension*. Washington DC: The World Bank.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Lamarra, N. 2003. Higher Education, quality evaluation and accreditation in Latin America and MERCOSUR. *European Journal of Education* Vol. 38, No. 3: 253-269.

<sup>102</sup> Verger, A., and Hermo, J.P. 2010. P. 111.



and faculty within the region. The first triennial plan was extended from its original end date of 1994 to be implemented in the period 1995-1997. A second Plan was established from 1998-2000. In June 1998, a Memorandum for the Experimental Procedure for the Accreditation of Programmes for the Recognition of University Undergraduate Degrees in the MERCOSUR countries was passed by the MME. In 2001, a Strategic Plan to be utilised from 2001-2006 replaced the previous triennial plan. A second Strategic Plan was developed in 2006.<sup>103</sup>

### *3.2.2 PHASES AND GOALS*

Martinez-Larrechea and Chinconne-Castro identify three main phases in the MERCOSUR regional higher education coordination: 1. 1991-1998, 2. 1998-2005, and 3. 2006-2010. The first period includes the four original members and foundational agreements which were signed. The first agreement was the 1994 Protocol for Recognition of Primary and Secondary Education to establish a common area of basic education, which led to approving studies completed in any member state. Next, the issue of regional accreditation was undertaken in the second period and the third phase saw the new strategic plan and enlargement of the MERCOSUR.

The MERCOSUR has three main themes of policy convergence, in areas of accreditation, mobility, and inter-institutional cooperation. The 'accreditation' theme is concerned with quality, mutual recognition of degrees, and the development of a regional academic space. MEXA, the Experimental Mechanism of Accreditation has been a tool of implementation for this area of importance. MEXA was spearheaded by national accreditation bodies. The countries involved in the MERCOSUR agreement also independently developed accreditation and evaluation organisations on the national level during a similar time to the development of the regional initiatives to address the same issues. It is not clear which was the catalyst, but it is clear that a relationship exists between the national and regional efforts in higher education at that time. The 'mobility' goals are also to develop a regional academic space, but this is implemented through the Regional Academic Mobility of Accredited Careers (MARCA). The impact of this mechanism is still pending. In addition to mobility within the region, the MERCOSUR has also made arrangements with the EU to facilitate inter-regional mobility. 'Inter-institutional cooperation' is concerned with development of collaborative programmes, joint research, and networks of academics in the region.

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<sup>103</sup> Martinez-Larrechea, E., and Chiancone-Castro. 2009.

Many memoranda and protocols were debated and agreed to during the nineties and in the past decade. These range from agreements about primary and secondary education systems to those including higher education. The most advancements have been made in the area of higher education. The Protocol on Educational Integration for Human Resources and Graduate Level Training notes the importance of education in the regional integration process and that regional exchange of ideas and cooperation in higher education is the best way to improve all Member States' policies.<sup>104</sup>

Most success in MERCOSUR's attempts to regionalise higher education has been in terms of accreditation. This perhaps has links to Brazil's experience with the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education (CAPES), which was established in the 1960s to standardise accreditation of graduates in Brazil. This had an influence on other countries in the region, most notably Argentina. Some of the standardisation measures in Brazil were replaced in the 1990s and the Brazilian authorities have created a Special Commission for the Evaluation of Higher Education in order to propose a new system for evaluating higher education.<sup>105</sup> In addition to this example, Colombia, Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina also established national-level programmes for ensuring quality and accrediting universities. This reveals the national importance of this issue to many of the Member States of MERCOSUR, which established a fertile ground for the regional efforts in higher education.

Lamarra suggests that the precedent set by the national approaches created an 'evaluation culture' in higher education, which responded to the earlier tensions between university autonomy and evaluation in the region. The stricter accreditation procedures that were developed in each of these countries in the mid-1990s also reduced the number of private universities that were allowed to develop, which has helped to establish a greater level of homogeneity in university culture within these countries.<sup>106</sup> The homogeneity at the national level makes regionalisation a more manageable endeavour.

The definition of quality that was established by MERCOSUR through working groups of experts includes external and internal consistency. 'External consistency' refers to the modification of an institution's definitions to those agreed upon by the regional grouping, while 'internal consistency'

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<sup>104</sup> MERCOSUR. 1995. Protocol on Educational Integration of Human Resource Training at the Graduate Level. Montevideo, Uruguay.

<sup>105</sup> Lamarra, N. 2003.

<sup>106</sup> Lamarra, N. 2003.

denotes the programme's ability to respond to the institution's needs and purposes.<sup>107</sup> Additionally, national accreditation decisions are made compatible with others in the region through these procedures: decisions must be based on self-evaluation and external reviews, use of common criteria for each programme, external reviews must be executed by at least two reviewers from other MERCOSUR countries, and all external reviewers must be trained by the MERCOSUR secretariat.<sup>108</sup> Through this process, participating countries are able to trust the accreditation decisions of other countries and trust the process through which they were decided. Agronomy was the first field to undertake this strategy and engineering and medicine will be the next fields to undertake reform through this system of accreditation.

The working group of experts included key stakeholders including national governments, higher education institutions, professional associations, quality assurance agencies, and professional reviewers.

### 3.3 SYNTHESIS

Having discussed the case studies of the Bologna Process in Europe and MERCOSUR-Educativo in South America, this chapter continues to summarise the two case studies in order to derive insight into regional higher education initiatives and critique the experiences in the next section. The two case studies have a number of similarities and differences. The purpose of this section is not so much to compare the two, but to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the approaches and potential hurdles and critiques in order to better understand regional higher education projects for future implementation.

Although less articulated than the Bologna Process, the MERCOSUR objectives are "relevant and concrete".<sup>109</sup> Both projects have clearly identified goals that rely on the political will of individual Member States to develop and implement. The establishment of these goals was also achieved on a voluntary and consensual basis in each experience.

Both focus on accreditation, mobility, and institutional cooperation.<sup>110</sup> However, Bologna has adopted a system of shared structure of degrees, while MERCOSUR has not addressed this issue.

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<sup>107</sup> Lemaitre, M. 2005. Regional Networks of Quality Assurance Agencies: Towards a Common Framework of Standards and Procedures for Quality Assurance. *International Institute for Educational Planning*. UNESCO.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Martinez-Larrechea, and Chiancone-Castro, A. 2009. P. 483.

<sup>110</sup> Verger, A., Herme, J.P. 2010.

The implementation of each strategy has also been different. Verger and Hermo note that three key factors explain the variation in implementation between the two projects, 1. Available resources, 2. Supra-state institutionalisation, and 3. Broad regional context.<sup>111</sup> Some budgetary figures are inaccessible, but the mobilisation of people in each programme is vastly different: 150,000 people for ERASMUS (an EU function) in 2006 and 150 for MERCOSUR's MARCA programme in 2008.<sup>112</sup> There are a number of differences in each organisation including maturity, institutional robustness, and consolidation are at very different stages in each organisation.<sup>113</sup> This should serve as a caution to those desiring to purely compare the two cases, but also as a foundation for understanding the strengths and limits of each case.

Structure, governance, and legitimacy are the key variables identified by Hettne for evaluating territorial orders. Structure and legitimacy of both Bologna and MERCOSUR seem to have similar conditions, but the governing structures differ significantly. The structure is similar in terms of the relative equality of each Member State in relation to the regional arrangement. The legitimacy is derived from nation-states joining the respective agreements and consenting to the various protocols. In terms of membership, both have voluntary membership of nation-states and include participants that are not members of the respective regional bodies. The membership difference is stark in terms of numbers, 47 participating members of the Bologna Process and only ten participating in MERCOSUR.

In terms of governance, both processes include participants from civil society and non-governmental actors, but have different mechanisms for implementing the goals of the agreements. For Bologna, supra-national institutions have been created in the form of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), which has a structure of its own and funding (mostly from the EC) to promote cooperation in quality assurance. The MERCOSUR-Educativo, on the other hand, is comprised of national agencies seeking to implement the goals of the MERCOSUR.

The European Commission's involvement cannot be understated in the European case. The extent to which the Bologna Process and the EU have converged in terms of policies toward education and the resources provided by the EC are contributing factors to the continuity of the Bologna Process and its institutions.<sup>114</sup> The EU resources and structures have evidently benefited the implementation of the Bologna Process. It is also possible that for countries not party to the EU an

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> MARCA only covers the field of Agronomy

<sup>113</sup> Verger, A., Hermo, J.P. 2010.

<sup>114</sup> Verger, A., Hermo, J.P. 2010.

incentive for joining the Bologna Process is due to its close links with the EU. Also, the regional economic space and the common labour market provide significant support for the integration of higher education.

Even though the initiatives were consented to by nation-states and the ideas themselves evolved from these same participating members, the regional blocs that are involved in each case have an influence on the policies. In both cases, it can be argued that the economic, commercial and political interests of the respective regional interests supercede the higher education convergence.<sup>115</sup> As the review of literature about universities and cooperation suggests, these priorities have been placed parallel to regional interests of competitiveness and the knowledge economy. The language of Protocols and Communiqués in both case studies suggest the regional interests in and connection to the knowledge economy.

Additionally, the European initiatives have sought to link with Latin American higher education projects. This challenges the potential motivations for collaboration. The tension between collaboration and competition continues to be an issue in regional arrangements. The European involvement and influence in the Latin American higher education sector also provide additional challenges as well as potential strengths from the interaction. With the traditional colonial relationship between Latin America and Europe, modern efforts which mimic imperial arrangements from the past pose threats to the success of said endeavours.

This raises the issue of whether the highest goals are regional or inter-regional transferability and comparability. The European efforts to build relationships with Latin American higher education projects show the desire to export the Bologna Process to other parts of the world, which elevates it from a cooperative strategy within a region to a competitive one with the rest of the world.

### 3.4 CHALLENGES

Although it is mostly viewed as successful, the Bologna Process is facing a number of contradictions, most importantly between “the original emphasis on competitiveness and a new social agenda with a partly anti-globalist undercurrent”.<sup>116</sup> The political and ideological tensions threaten the success of the Bologna Process. The widening of the agenda clearly shows incorporation of social and cultural components that were left absent in the original competitiveness-focused iteration of the

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Wachter, B. 2004. p. 273.

Process. The tension between student and university members who focus more on the value of academic pursuits for their own sake with priorities of national economic interests could present greater problems in the future.

There is a greater availability of funds in the Bologna Process, which is attributable to the strong economies of countries involved and the availability of Cohesion Funds for poorer countries in the arrangement. There are fewer available resources in the MERCOSUR, which limits the expansion of goals and implementation of previously stated ones.

While Europe has created support structures for Bologna, MERCOSUR still has a number of hurdles as an economic community including common tariffs that reveal weaknesses in its overall efficacy as an organisation. Additionally, MERCOSUR does not have an international body to centralise bureaucratic elements of the organisation or an effective dispute mechanism.<sup>117</sup> Joint projects in MERCOSUR have been supported by ad hoc financial mechanisms, which also make the higher education initiatives weaker.

Both cases reveal the extent to which higher education regional harmonisation and integration projects are subsidiary to and affected by the economic and political situations in their respective regions. The higher education agendas are influenced by the political and economic goals of the regions. This creates a hurdle for both institutions and individual states who have diverse goals and backgrounds.

Brunner argues that there is no common area in Latin America to serve as foundation for the type of integration occurring in higher education in Europe.<sup>118</sup> Additionally, he argues that with the current political economy conditions in Latin America that it is improbable and unlikely that integration in higher education similar to the scale and scope of the European case can be attained. It is important to note here, though, that the MERCOSUR example does not take an approach of the same scale and scope of the European example. The issue of privatism in Latin American universities, where attendance at private institutions and private funding for higher education outweighs public resources, is a primary limiting factor.<sup>119</sup> When most institutions are private, the impact of public decisions and policies is limited. Additionally, the likelihood of individual institutions to seek their own competitiveness over national or regional objectives is more likely

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<sup>117</sup> Verger, A., Hermo, J.P. 2010.

<sup>118</sup> Brunner, J. 2009. The Bologna Process from a Latin American Perspective. *Journal of Studies in International Education*. Vol. 13, No. 4:417-438.

<sup>119</sup> Brunner, J. 2009.

when private funding allows for greater autonomy. This has implications for the extent to which national and regional policies can impact the greater Latin American region. Finally, the legitimate instruments for implementing integration of higher education are also lacking in Latin America.<sup>120</sup>

Martinez-Larrechea and Chiancone-Castro suggest that the incremental efforts being made in the MERCOSUR are not enough and a credit system to make degree structures more compatible is necessary to deal with the challenges of developing a regional academic space. They suggest development of a regional mechanism, rather than limited national ones. Additionally, the expanding of the accreditation systems to incorporate more degrees and agreements for joint research are suggested.

### 3.5 APPLICATION OF REGIONAL THEORY

The case of the Bologna Process reveals how market integration can lead to additional integration of social and cultural elements of society that affect the economic integration. The economic integration led to questions of labour mobility and certification transferability within Europe, which called for the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Additionally, because of the economic integration of half of the members of the Bologna Process and desire of the others to also join the integration, the Declaration speaks of a clearly identified “European” citizenry. The integration has lent itself to a regional identity, or “regionness” as Maclean and Hettne identify it. Maclean, Hettne and Soderbaum explain the concept of ‘regionness’ and its importance to uniting a geo-political region for a common purpose.<sup>121</sup> Although the term region is often used to describe a subdivided geo-political space or an area with common interests and understanding, regionness is the combination of these factors connected to a particular space. Hettne describes ‘regionness’ as “a higher degree of economic interdependence, communication, cultural homogeneity, coherence, capacity to act and, in particular, capacity to resolve conflicts in

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Maclean, S. 1999. Peacebuilding and the New Regionalism in Southern Africa. *Third World Quarterly*. Vol. 29, No. 5: 944.; Hettne, B. and Soderbaum, F. 2002. Theorising the rise of regionness in Breslin, S., Hughes, C., Phillips, N., and Rosamond, B (eds.). *New Regionalisms in the Global Political Economy: Theories and Cases*. London and New York: Routledge.

the region concerned”.<sup>122</sup> The European case exhibits a higher level of regionness than the MERCOSUR case. An advanced level of regionness, or social cohesion, does seem to play a role in the advancement of joint initiatives in higher education because of the extent to which participating states see their identity as shared with the rest of the region.

The MERCOSUR-Educativo project shows how the goals of individual leaders and countries can unite to create a worthwhile project for all involved. This is more an example of regional cooperation, particularly as a precursor to integration at the regional level. The experiments with higher education policy at the regional level began with specific goals in accreditation and quality assurance and have grown into more robust mechanisms for making compatible degrees, structures, and other forms of education.

Jayasuriya argues that the Bologna Process rather fits the model of regulatory regionalism whereby it has created a higher education regulatory system that surpasses the boundaries of the European Union. The governance in this area is informal and flexible, which is at the discretion of the accountability community, which is created through the Bologna Process. The regulations under Bologna, in this case, have created a structure for maintaining legitimacy.

Jayasuriya suggests that the Lisbon and Bologna agendas promote three similar goals: 1. “producing more competitive individuals and societies”, 2. “enabling greater mobility of staff and students essential for the creation of a knowledge-based economy”, and 3. “placing emphasis on the monitoring of quality and standards through the meta-governance of national institutions”.<sup>123</sup> It can be argued that the MERCOSUR project also has these goals, but is perhaps not as capable of fulfilling them as the European example.

Accountability communities help with the organisation of new systems of multi-level governance, according to Jayasuriya. In the context of accountability communities and regulatory regionalism, one can begin to understand the relationship between the Lisbon agenda and the Bologna Process.<sup>124</sup> Using the European case, Robertson advances the discussion of regulatory regionalism

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<sup>122</sup> Hettne quoted in Maclean, 1999: 947.

<sup>123</sup> Jayasuriya, K. 2010. pg 18

<sup>124</sup> Jayasuriya, K. 2010.



to say that the European experiences reveals state-like behaviour of a regional community in that it reaches beyond national and regional boundaries to other parts of the world.<sup>125</sup>

In addition to the individual regional efforts, the European Commission and Bologna Process have reached beyond their respective borders to attempt to facilitate interregional cooperation. However, Grugel suggests that the notions of democracy and social citizenship differ between Europe and MERCOSUR and interregional efforts are, therefore, flawed and difficult to implement.<sup>126</sup>

Through this discussion, it is clear that different theoretical approaches are used by both the Bologna Process and MERCOSUR in approaching higher education regionalisation. The extent to which each organisation has achieved its goals also differs based on a multitude of reasons as discussed above. With a better understanding of two specific cases of regionalisation of higher education, this study now turns to the particular case of southern Africa with an analysis of the SADC and the state of higher education and higher education governance in the region.

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<sup>125</sup> Robertson, S. 2010. The EU, 'regulatory state regionalism' and new modes of higher education governance. *Globalisation Societies, and Education* Vol. 8, No. 1: 23-37.

<sup>126</sup> Grugel, J. 2007. Democratization and ideational diffusion: Europe, Mercosur and Social Citizenship. *JCMS* Vol. 45, no. 1: 43-68.

## CHAPTER 4 - SOUTHERN AFRICA ATTEMPTS AND LIMITS

This chapter opens with a description of the context of Southern Africa in terms of higher education, then turns to a specific discussion of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and its attempts to respond to the problems of higher education through a regional approach. Following the discussion of the SADC, the chapter considers another option for regional approaches to higher education in southern Africa. Finally, the chapter closes with critiques and analysis of regional higher education initiatives in the southern Africa. The particular context of African and, specifically southern African, universities and higher education is important to understand prior to considering the options to reform these institutions through regional initiatives.

### 4.1 CONTEXT

Muchie outlines four distinct periods of higher education, research, and knowledge in Africa: 1. pre-15<sup>th</sup> century phase of learning, knowledge and education that was ignored and rejected by the colonial powers in Africa, 2. the colonial period, which established higher education as an instrument for the colonial powers to maintain influence, 3. period of decolonization when newly independent states developed the university model that had been left to them by the colonial powers, 4. the crisis in higher education which resulted from the structural adjustment programmes proposed to the developing world which devalued higher education. It is important to note that during the third phase and decolonization, the phase of the “developmental university” began, which strengthened links with the West as donors to higher education in an effort to encourage nation-building in the new states.<sup>127</sup> The structural adjustment programmes did little to promote the growth of post-colonial universities and left developing countries, and particularly those in Africa, ill-prepared to respond to the pressures of globalisation and the growing knowledge economy. This history contributes to the poor state of higher education in southern Africa.

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<sup>127</sup> Muchie, M. 2009. Higher Education, Research and Knowledge for African Integration in The Challenges of Regional Integration and its Implications for Higher Education. *SARUA Leadership Dialogue Series* Vol.1, no. 2.

Only 0.4 percent of the total population in the SADC region are enrolled in higher education and if South Africa is excluded from this statistic, the percentage decreases to only 0.2 percent.<sup>128</sup> There are 70 universities in the SADC region spread throughout 15 countries. There are an estimated 114 publicly funded polytechnics and specialised colleges and an estimated 170 private universities or colleges in the SADC region.<sup>129</sup> Within these universities, there is a variety of degree structures, certification criteria, and curricula standards, which make transferability of credits and certification from one country to the next nearly impossible. It also hinders labour mobility and development of human capital in the region.<sup>130</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2, the global trends and pressures of the knowledge economy and globalisation have influenced policy decisions at the national and regional level in diverse ways.

However, not all African countries are currently capable of providing the programmes and higher education options necessary for the economic and social development of their citizens, so many rely on other countries for these services, especially in the area of higher education.<sup>131</sup> Recognising this, it is important to consider a framework for ensuring transferability of credits and qualifications.

With an understanding of the contextual issues facing the region, this thesis now turns to a description of the SADC and its attempts to respond to higher education in the region.

## 4.2 SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) developed from the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), which was established in Lusaka, Zambia on 1 April 1980.<sup>132</sup> On 17 August 1992, the SADC Treaty and Declaration transformed the SADCC into what is known today as the SADC. This new organization, including South Africa, shifted away from the goal of breaking neighbouring countries' dependency on the apartheid state towards the goal of

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<sup>128</sup> Butcher, N., Wilson-Strydom, M., Hoosen, S., MacDonald, C., Moore, A., and Barnes, L. 2008. Profile of Higher Education in the Region in *Towards a Common Future: Higher Education in the SADC Region, Research Findings from Four SARUA Studies*. SARUA.

<sup>129</sup> SARUA publication. These figures are estimates based on available data in the SARUA report.

<sup>130</sup> Hoosen, S., Butcher, N., Njenga, B. 2009. Harmonization of Higher Education Programmes: A Strategy for the African Union. *African Integration Review* Vol. 3, No. 1:1-36.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> [www.sadc.int/index/browse/page/715#](http://www.sadc.int/index/browse/page/715#)

economic integration.<sup>133</sup> SADC now has fifteen member states: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Another important shift occurred in 1992, the shift from SADC being a coordination conference to being a development community.<sup>134</sup>

The SADC's vision "is that of a common future, a future within a regional community that will ensure economic well-being, improvement of the standards of living and quality of life, freedom and social justice and peace and security for the people of Southern Africa. This shared vision is anchored on the common values and principles and the historical and cultural affinities that exist between the people of Southern Africa".<sup>135</sup> This vision reveals the commitment to fostering a community within the region. The SADC's mission is "to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development through efficient productive systems, deeper co-operation and integration, good governance, and durable peace and security, so that the region emerges as a competitive and effective player in international relations and the world economy".<sup>136</sup> This mission reveals the SADC's desire to encourage growth and development through increased cooperation and integration, which requires further harmonisation of individual Member States' policies in agreement with regional goals.

Other SADC goals include equitable economic growth, the promotion of common political values through democratic institutions, combating HIV/AIDS, and the eradication of poverty<sup>137</sup>. In order to achieve these objectives, the SADC Treaty proclaims that SADC shall "harmonise political and socio-economic policies and plans of Member States" and "develop policies aimed at the progressive elimination of obstacles to the free movement of capital and labour, goods and services, and of the people of the Region generally, among Member States".<sup>138</sup> The SADC treaty identifies the elimination of obstacles to free movement of capital and labour as important to achieving the objectives of the SADC. It is important to note that "migrations are not an isolated phenomenon: movements of commodities and capital almost always give rise to movements of people".<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Lee, M. 2003.

<sup>135</sup> [www.sadc.int](http://www.sadc.int)

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> [www.sadc.int/index/browse/page/120#article4](http://www.sadc.int/index/browse/page/120#article4)

<sup>139</sup> Castles, S., and Miller, M. 2009. *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York and London: Guilford Press. pg. 4.

Essentially, the increase in cooperation, trade, and goals of the SADC inherently work to influence the movement of people within the region, as well.

The movement of people within any region gives rise to questions and concerns about the quality of human capital in a region. This includes issues of education levels, qualifications, and skills of those migrating within a region.

### 4.3 SADC EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROTOCOL

The SADC met in Blantyre, Malawi in September 1997 to create and sign the Protocol on Education and Training. The ultimate stated objective of the Protocol was to “progressively achieve the equivalence, harmonization and standardization of the education and training systems in the Region”.<sup>140</sup> The time period first envisioned by the signers of the Protocol to achieve this ultimate objective was intended to be a period “not exceeding twenty years”. The Protocol was signed in September 1997.

The Preamble focuses on the importance of human development and human resources to achieve the objectives of the SADC Treaty and overcome the socio-economic problems in the region. In order to achieve sustainable development, the Protocol highlights the need for high literacy and numeracy and socio-economic and technological research. Although there is not much justification for highlighting these goals, the Preamble of the Protocol does propose that none of the Member States alone can offer “the full range of world quality education and training programmes at affordable costs and on a sustainable basis”, so these programmes must have national and regional components.

The objectives of the Protocol were originally to: develop a common reporting system for Member States to collect data, establishment of a mechanism for pooling resources, coordinate comparable policies for education and training, encourage participation of the private and non-governmental sectors, promotion of science and technology, reduce the barriers to quality education, relax immigration formalities to assist movement of students and staff, encourage educated persons to use their skills and knowledge in the Member States, development of English and Portuguese as

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<sup>140</sup> Southern African Development Community. 1997. Education and Training Protocol. Blantyre, Malawi.

operating languages of the Region, and to “progressively achieve the equivalence, harmonisation and standardization of the education and training systems in the Region”.<sup>141</sup>

The Protocol suggests regional cooperation in addressing gender disparity, increasing access to education, rationalising admission requirements to higher education institutions, developing teaching materials jointly, financing partnerships for education and training, and achieving comparability of systems.

The Protocol calls on Member States to work toward a mutual recognition of qualifications and to work toward a framework for allowing transfer of credit between Member States. The implementation method for these ideals is not made clear, however. Additionally, the desire to create an intellectual community of scholars within the region is clear, but the mechanisms for implementing this are not. The implementation for many of the goals is left to the Member States to recommend to their universities, rather than regulation or legislation.

Discussion of primary and secondary education does not directly link these levels of education with development and improving the economy, but does declare them as important building blocks for higher education. The first level of education that the Protocol directly links with the economy and development is intermediate education and training at the certificate and diploma levels.

A main goal with the deadlines in the Protocol was to establish that Member States “within ten years from the date of entry into force of this Protocol, they shall treat students from SADC countries as home students for purposes of fees and accommodation”.<sup>142</sup> This links with the idea of mobility and migration within the region. The Protocol suggests greater mobility for staff and students, but this is challenged by other dynamics in the SADC, which is discussed later.

The Protocol highlights specific areas of educational needs for the region without indicating why these sectors are specifically struggling. In Article 7, which focuses on “Cooperation in Higher Education and Training”, Section E whose focus is “Centres of Specialisation”, medicine and engineering are referred to as “critical disciplines” and should be focused on at the regional level for both post-graduate and under-graduate level, whereas most Centres of Specialisation should be regional programmes consisting primarily of post-graduate fields of study.

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<sup>141</sup> Southern African Development Community. 1997. Education and Training Protocol. Blantyre, Malawi.

<sup>142</sup> Southern African Development Community. 1997. Education and Training Protocol. Blantyre, Malawi.

The Protocol calls for the development of Centres of Specialisation. The goal of creating Centres of Specialisation is “to build capacity for regional training institutions to offer education and training programmes in critical and specialized areas and thereby increase the stock of trained personnel in the Region.”<sup>143</sup> The Protocol serves as an agreement on behalf of Member States to establish Centres of Specialisation at existing institutions and to strengthen programmes in order to offer them at a regional level. The programmes are intended to be in post-graduate fields, but can be extended in critical disciplines. The Protocol lists medicine and engineering as critical disciplines, but does not give any evidence or rationale as to why these disciplines are critical in the region. Section 7.E further outlines that quota systems will be in place for students from the SADC countries and all students from SADC countries will be regarded as home students for the purposes of fees and accommodation. The Protocol additionally calls for the creation of Centres of Excellence to promote research within the Region.

Throughout the Protocol emphasis is placed on specific fields such as engineering and medicine as well as science and technology more broadly without qualification of these focus areas. The signers intend for focus on these fields to lead to development and improvements for the economy of the region, but without clear discussion of how these objectives will be achieved or what the link is between these fields and development and economic improvement.

At each level of education, the Protocol leaves implementation to the Member States without any substantial framework to work toward these goals. Times for meetings and follow-up are left ambiguous with phrases such as ‘from time to time’.

In a 2010 Meeting of the SADC Ministers responsible for Education and Training in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, the participants acknowledged the SADC’s goals in adopting the seven priority areas of the AU Second Decade Plan of Action and the Protocol on Education and Training. The meeting discussed trends at all levels of education. The meeting recognized the student mobility within the region and that some Member States had fulfilled the obligation of treating other SADC students as local students in terms of tuition and accommodation fees. This goal was supposed to be implemented in ten years after the Protocol took force, which was obviously not accomplished in all Member States. The meeting also approved the development of a Regional Qualifications Framework in order to provide a tool for comparing and recognizing qualifications from any state in the region.

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<sup>143</sup> Southern African Development Community. 1997. Education and Training Protocol. Blantyre, Malawi.

## 4.4 CRITIQUES OF THE PROTOCOL

As of 2011, the Protocol has unfortunately not yet reached its intended goals. There are a number of reasons for the inability of the SADC to achieve these objectives, which will be discussed later in this chapter. At this point, it is important to understand the document and its stated goals.

Hesitancy is obvious in the tone of the Protocol as it serves only a recommending role rather than a prescriptive or authoritative role for Member States. It also relies completely on the will and discretion of individual Member States to fulfil the goals at the national level.

The Protocol refers many times to “socially disadvantaged groups”, but does not adequately define this term for the purposes of the Protocol. The Protocol calls on Member States to selectively promote students from socially disadvantaged groups without giving appropriate guidelines for identifying these students or providing support for Member States in determining these guidelines. This has potential to lead to unequal treatment and further inequality depending on interpretations of individual Member States.

As evidenced by the discussion about the most significant attempt thus far to increase transferability of credit and certification and harmonise higher education at the regional level in Southern Africa, the outlook for success of a structural regional harmonisation of higher education is bleak at best. This Protocol is well-intentioned and seeks to foster cooperation in region in the field of education, but it falls quite short of achieving this goal.

In addition, the text of the Protocol highlights many of the challenges to achieving regional integration in Africa. While it touts the desire to integrate, harmonise, and improve human resources in the region, the Protocol consistently puts the onus on individual Member States to develop the various goals of the Protocol within their own territory. This language and emphasis on individual Member States does little to promote cooperation and integration, but much to perpetuate state centrism and boundaries.

The Protocol also consistently urges Member States to work toward “the gradual relaxation and eventual elimination of immigration formalities that hinder free student and staff mobility”.<sup>144</sup> This

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<sup>144</sup>Southern African Development Community. 1997. Education and Training Protocol. Blantyre, Malawi. Section 7.E.



is generally a component of higher education initiatives, but this component is problematic the southern African case.

The SADC has had a schizophrenic approach to issues of labour mobility and facilitating movement in the region. Labour mobility and migration are central issues at stake in regional higher education arrangements and these arrangements generally facilitate and increase intraregional movement rather than decrease it. In an attempt to increase labour mobility, create a regional identity and facilitate regional integration, a Draft Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons was developed by the SADC Secretariat in the mid-1990s.<sup>145</sup> However, this effort eventually fell flat due to hesitation by South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. Their fears were mostly due to the perceived increase of migrants and subsequent loss of jobs for nationals.<sup>146</sup> This hesitation and the focus on national-level priorities reveal the weaknesses in regional integration within the SADC and the southern African region generally. The prominence of South Africa also poses problems to the success of the SADC.

The SADC's approaches through the 1997 Education and Training Protocol lack clarity of definitions, fall short of achieving stated goals, rely too heavily on national-level implementation relative to political will, and approaches the issue of mobility from a contradictory position. The problems in this approach suggest the need for an alternative approach.

In addition to the SADC's approach to integrate higher education at the regional level, there is a non-governmental association of public universities in the region that provides an alternative mechanism for facilitating relationships and working to increase comparability of programmes and degree structures. The following section outlines this organization as a potential alternative to the SADC's as a way of responding to the issues facing higher education in southern Africa.

#### 4.5 SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL UNIVERSITY'S ASSOCIATION (SARUA)

The Southern African Regional University's Association (SARUA) is a non-governmental, membership-based organisation which is open to the 70 public universities in the 15 countries of

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<sup>145</sup> Southern African Development Community. 1995. Draft Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons in the Southern African Development Community. Gaborone. [www.sadc.int](http://www.sadc.int)

<sup>146</sup> Oucho, J. and Crush, J. 2001. Contra Free Movement: South Africa and the SADC Migration Protocols. *Africa Today* 48(3):139-158.

the Southern African Development Community (SADC).<sup>147</sup> The organisation was founded in 2005 and as of August 2010 had 51 public universities as members. The mandate of SARUA is to “assist in the revitalisation and development of the leadership and institutions of Higher Education in the Southern African region, thus enabling the regional Higher Education sector to meaningfully respond to the developmental challenges facing the region”.<sup>148</sup> Its purpose is to “strengthen the leadership and institutions of Higher Education in the Southern African region, thereby consolidating a Southern African Agenda for higher education which results in a significant contribution by Higher Education to national and regional development”.<sup>149</sup>

SARUA provides an alternative initiative to the more formal top-down approach of the SADC Protocol. SARUA specifically works with universities on a voluntary basis. This relies on consent of those participating and the members to be active in achieving goals of the organisation.

SARUA is also responsible for producing high quality research about higher education within the SADC. This research is used to inform policymakers and institutions of higher learning in order to facilitate regional development and transformation of the higher education sector in the region. The publications have stimulated discussion about these issues within the region and drawn together academics from across the region.

SARUA also has a Governance, Leadership and Management Programme designed as a three-pronged system to address needs of management of higher education in the region. The initiatives include Vice Chancellor Leadership Exchange Events, Executive Programme of Strategic Focus Events, and a Certificate Course in Higher Education Management offered through the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa.

The discussion of the SADC Protocol as well as the founding and development of SARUA suggests two parallel, but different, objectives with regard to regional higher education initiatives in the region.

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<sup>147</sup> [www.sarua.org](http://www.sarua.org)

<sup>148</sup> [www.sarua.org](http://www.sarua.org): “About Us”

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

## 4.5 CHALLENGES AND LIMITS

Although in other regional arrangements a primary goal of harmonising higher education policies and qualifications is to facilitate movement of people within the region, the hesitancy of the SADC to pass protocols supporting the free movement of people in the region presents a potential contradiction in goals. This case clearly illustrates the tenuous relationship between regional goals and national interests in the region. This issue is not unique to southern Africa, but seems to present a more distinct hurdle to the effective accomplishment of stated regional goals. Despite these hurdles in Europe and South America, the respective regional organizations in each have made more progress in achieving their stated goals.

Dhunpath and Paterson describe an experience they had as researchers in producing research for education and information communication technologies (ICT) policy formulation for the SADC. They argue that research for the SADC has not been seen as valuable in itself, but is valuable insofar as it leads to procuring funding from aid organisations and multilateral and bilateral agreements.<sup>150</sup> Research, then, is a means to an end and not a valuable means in itself. Not only does this suggest problems for policy formulation in the SADC, but in developing countries relying on donor funding in general. A new regional theory suggests that external guarantors<sup>151</sup> can fund particular regional projects that are seen as beneficial, but this model will be derailed by policymakers whose focus is income generation and not focused on sustainable development.

Additionally, the extent to which ICT is used in each national context within the SADC differs incredibly and the dismissive attitudes of representatives at regional meetings requires questioning the extent to which there is common ground for regional cooperation or integration in this area.

The motivations for the Protocol are also unclear. It is not clear in the Protocol whether higher education is being pursued for cooperative purposes in the region or in order to integrate with the knowledge economy. The antecedents for this Protocol are also ambiguous. In each of the other case studies, there was a clear progression in each region which led to the attempts to regionalise higher education. In southern Africa, there seems to be mutual recognition of the problems facing

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<sup>150</sup> Dhunpath, R., and A. Paterson. 2004. The interface between research and policy dialogue: substantive or symbolic. *Journal of Education* Vol. 10, no. 33: 125-146.

<sup>151</sup> Lee, M. 2003.

the region and acknowledgment of education as a useful response, but this doesn't seem to connect with other energy in this field within the region.

There are in addition to the SADC's efforts, several other regional higher education initiatives in Africa and these present a risk of duplication of efforts and potential conflicts of processes should the African Union or another Africa-wide organisation seek to further harmonise the sub-regional efforts.<sup>152</sup> The African Union has expressed interest in using the regional economic communities (RECs) to address sub-regional concerns ranging from economics to health to social and cultural issues in an attempt to eventually bring these processes together to a continent-wide solution to these problems. Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are identified in the Abuja Treaty "as the building blocks towards an African Economic Community".<sup>153</sup> The Protocol on the Relations between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities defines regional economic communities as "a regional grouping of African states organized into a legal entity by treaty, with economic and social integration as its main objective".<sup>154</sup> The African Union has partnered with eight sub-regional organizations throughout the continent, including the SADC, in order to better achieve its goals. The AU, then, has become a coordinating body for the sub-regional efforts throughout the continent. The Preamble of the 2007 Protocol on Relations Between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities highlights the need to accelerate the integration processes in the continent with an overall goal of establishing a common market in Africa and an African Economic Community.<sup>155</sup> The objectives of the AU Protocol show the desire to consolidate and harmonise individual policies and cooperate in a more effective way to achieve integration. This objective at the continental level does present problems for the sub-regions within Africa whose efforts may diverge from the continental goals and risks of duplication of efforts or conflicting processes.

The AU Protocol specifically highlights that "the main obstacles to the full implementation of the policies, measures and programmes of the RECs include resource constraints ... to plan, manage, implement, follow-up and monitor the implementation of agreed decisions policies measures,

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<sup>152</sup> Hoosen, S., Butcher, N., and Njenga, B. 2009.

<sup>153</sup> Southern African Regional Universities Association. 2009. The Challenges of Regional Integration and Its Implications for Higher Education. *SARUA Leadership Dialogue Series* Vol. 1, no. 2. p. 24.

<sup>154</sup> African Union. 2007. Protocol on Relations Between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities.

<sup>155</sup> African Union. 2007. Protocol on Relations Between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities.

programmes and activities”.<sup>156</sup> There are also a number of challenges to regional initiatives in Africa in general including the competing commitments of states which are party to multiple organizations, the political and economic heterogeneity of the continent, low levels of accountability, weak governance, and unequal benefits and costs associated with integration.<sup>157</sup>

Finally, the tension between internationalising and Africanising higher education presents a problem for higher education institutions in Africa. Africanisation can be understood as the way a university “endeavours to retain its African character to achieve certain academic, economic political, and cultural aims”.<sup>158</sup> Some scholarship suggests that internationalising and Africanising are not compatible for universities, but others note that local knowledge and grounding can allow the institution to engage critically with international knowledge systems.

As evidenced by the challenges, there are a number of conceptual issues and governance hurdles for regionalisation of higher education in southern Africa, as well as some interesting theoretical perspectives.

#### 4.6 LINKS WITH THEORY

The SADC has taken many approaches to implement its regional integration. At the moment, the SADC claims to take a development integration approach, but has not set up the necessary infrastructure to ensure that the regional integration does not unequally advantage or disadvantage Member States. Additionally, Margaret Lee suggests that although “in theory SADC has adopted a strategy of development integration, in practice, the organization appears to be pursuing a combination of regional cooperation and market integration”.<sup>159</sup> The Education and Training Protocol does not set up mechanisms for distributing the benefits of itself equally to all Member States. It is also unclear as to whether the Member States seek harmonisation of education in order

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Gibb, R. 2009. Regional Integration and Africa’s Development Trajectory: meta-theories, expectations, and reality. *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 4:701-721.; Poku, N. 2001. Uneven Globalisation and human Insecurity in Africa. In Nana Poku (ed.) *Security and Development in Southern Africa*. Oxford: Praeger Publishers.; Asante, S.K.B. 1997.

<sup>158</sup> Botha, M. 2010. Compatibility between internationalizing and Africanizing higher education in South Africa. *Journal of Studies in International Education* Vol. 14, No. 2:200-213.

<sup>159</sup> Lee, M. 2003. p. 27.

to improve cooperation and mobility in the region or to increase its competitiveness with the rest of the world.

The extent to which southern Africa exhibits regionness is also limited. There is certainly regional space<sup>160</sup> as identified by the 15 Member States of the SADC and a regional complex in which there are interactions of people from within the region. The historical context of the region contributes to the regional complex. Formal regional cooperation has taken place through the SADC and a regional society, at least in language, has been established. There are formal structures in place to facilitate region-building, but the stronger Member States have more control over this process than others, which limits the ability to establish a regional identity and to treat each other as equals (as the SADC Treaty suggests). There are goals of establishing an identity for the region as the next level of regionness suggests, but this has not been achieved at a deep level. This leaves the SADC vaguely in the third level of regionness.

Several scholars have noted necessary prerequisites to integrating at the regional level, which do not exist in the SADC. There is a great deal of heterogeneity in the region and very little inter-regional trade, which are hurdles to integration at the market level. The hurdles to achieving regional integration do not bode well for the goals of regionalising higher education. If southern Africa is to achieve integration or convergence in the area of higher education, it is unlikely that this will be achieved through the SADC alone. The lack of a theoretical approach for the SADC is one of its greatest challenges to achieving regional integration and its goals of higher education harmonisation.

The SARUA, on the other hand, has taken an approach of regional cooperation in the field of higher education. There are participants from 51 universities participating at a sub-state level to achieve cooperation in the field of higher education in the region. This has taken the form of compiling data and reports to develop a common information base for the region and hosting events for leaders from the Member States. SARUA has identified common problems in the areas of higher education and undertaken to compile data and bring scholars together to work toward solving these problems through cooperation in the region.

It is not clear that either the SADC or SARUA can accomplish their regional higher education goals alone. There does still appear to be motivation for improving cooperation and eventually harmonising higher education at the regional level in southern Africa, but attempts at this stage are

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<sup>160</sup> The first level of regionness as defined by Hettne

limited. This realisation encourages scholars and policymakers to look to other regional higher education arrangements for lessons and valuable insight. The following chapter synthesises the case studies, analyses strengths and weaknesses, and provides recommendations for future attempts.

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## CHAPTER 5 – ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

With the case studies from South America and Europe as well as the vast review of literature about regionalism and regional higher education initiatives, it is important to ask how these experiences can inform regional higher education initiatives in general and southern Africa specifically.

This chapter begins with an analysis and synthesis of the above case studies, highlighting strengths and weaknesses of each approach. This discussion is followed by recommendations and lessons for regional higher education initiatives and closes with conclusions for the dissertation.

### 5.1 SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS

This section summarises the above case studies and analyses the concepts, ideas, and motivations inherent in regional higher education arrangements. Beginning with a consideration of the variables of structure, governance, and legitimacy this section draws each of the case studies together into a manageable conclusion.

The variables of structure, governance, and legitimacy are once again useful to consider in each of the cases. The structure of the organizations is similar in that they have participating Member States and use meetings of the participating countries to make decisions. The governance of these structures differ a great deal. The Bologna Process is the only initiative to create supra-national mechanisms for implementing its goals. It has also partnered with the EU rather than being implemented by the EU. The MERCOSUR and SADC cases show a regional organization incorporating issues of higher education onto their agendas.

The Bologna and MERCOSUR cases specifically focus on higher education, whereas the SADC 1997 Education and Training Protocol incorporates all levels of education into one document. Although the Bologna Process's goals have widened, both the Bologna Process and MERCOSUR began with a set of clearly articulated and narrow goals. The SADC Protocol presents a multitude of problem statements and goals in order to respond to them. The lack of a clear focus presents a problem for the southern African case.



The Bologna and MERCOSUR cases reveal the extent to which political will of individual states can lead to implementation of stated goals. Although MERCOSUR has resource limitations, similar to the SADC, it has used available resources at the national level to implement the stated objectives of the various protocols. Fourteen years after the SADC Protocol, primary objectives have still not been met.

A particularly striking lesson to be learned from the increasing emphasis on higher education around the globe is its inherent importance in the development of domestic and regional economies. North America and Europe seem to be focused on creating more service-oriented and knowledge-economy driven jobs and industries to make a firm grasp on these areas for themselves. This conclusion is not yet written and can still be attained by other regions of the world if similar focus is put into higher education and developing human capital.

## 5.2 STRENGTHS AND LIMITS

Identifying strengths and limits of the various approaches is useful for regional higher education arrangements in general, but specifically for southern Africa. This section begins by considering the strengths of the above case studies, then closes by mentioning limits and weaknesses of the approaches.

The potential for various regional higher education initiatives to benefit their participating Member States by harmonising and increasing comparability of higher education institutions at the regional level is revealed by the recognition in each case that none of the individual Member States have the capacity to offer the full range of services and programmes that the regional space allows.

The political will of the Member States of the Bologna Process and MERCOSUR-Educativo have led to advancements in the stated goals of each agreement. The implementation in both cases has largely been left to the individual nation-states, which suggests the power of the individual states in each case. The supra-state institutions in the European case have been useful in implementation, but have developed from the original nationally-driven agreement.

Both the MERCOSUR and Bologna projects have focused on accreditation, mobility, and inter-institutional cooperation. A striking difference in terms of accreditation is that the European case offers a supra-state body to facilitate quality assurance and accreditation, while the other cases use

national-level institutions to implement goals. The supra-state institutions have been able to thrive because of their development over time and evolution from national-level institutions. Most European countries had their own accreditation and quality assurance mechanisms at the national level before regionalisation was a goal. This differs from the Southern American and southern African cases because in each region, the national-level bodies have largely developed as a result of or parallel to regional agreements and cooperation in higher education.

Additionally, both the European and South American cases work to facilitate mobility of students and staff, while the southern African case has a more ambiguous approach to mobility. The 1997 Education and Training Protocol claims to facilitate movement, but other mobility discussions in the SADC have been tenuous. Southern Africa has also focused on cooperation at the institutional, state, and regional levels, but with less success.

The inclusion of all actors affected by regionalisation higher education in the Bologna Process can be seen as both a strength and a weakness. It has resulted in the widening of the agenda, which blurs the stated goals. However, the inclusion has also ensured that all key stakeholders have a voice in the Bologna Process, which assists with its participation because of the ownership of the Process at all relevant levels. Neither MERCOSUR nor SADC have incorporated such a vast array of participants in their implementation strategies.

The Bologna case has a shared degree structure, whereas the other cases do not. It is not necessary to have a shared degree structure in order to share credits and mutually recognise accreditation, but this does seem to be a higher level of convergence in terms of the European case. It is unclear at this stage whether this is more or less useful in achieving the overall goals of the Process.

A major weakness in any regional initiative, but particularly relevant in the issues of higher education, is the potential for the initiative to widen before its original intent is completely implemented. An example of this lies in the Bologna Process. The agenda of the Bologna Process began with narrow and clearly articulated goals, but has widened to incorporate a vast array of objectives. This widening makes original policy goals more difficult to achieve because of the increase in focus areas.

The European case reveals the extent to which political relationships in terms of a supra-national body and an intergovernmental agreement can become tenuous. Fortunately in this case, the EU has served mostly a supportive role of the Bologna Process. The EU economic objectives have influenced the policy goals of the Bologna Process, however.

Also, unclear and contradictory goals can limit the effectiveness of regional higher education objectives. The contradictory goals of regional cooperation and international competition can create tension in national-level decision-making. A state in this situation must sell two seemingly contradictory objectives to its constituency, cooperation with some states, but competition with others. At what point could this tension undermine goals? This leads to a consideration of many of the problems associated with regional initiatives in general: national interests conflicting with regional ones.

Additionally, a weakness of and challenge to regional approaches in higher education is the tension between competition and cooperation. Is the goal to increase competitiveness with the world economy? Is the goal to increase cooperation within the region? How can a region assure that the member states seek to improve regional competitiveness and not purely a national interest? These are only a few of the questions that arise as a result of this tension.

### 5.3 THEORETICAL APPROACHES

As the case studies indicate, structural approaches to harmonise higher education at the regional level have taken on distinctly different approaches based on context and regional needs. The more successful approaches have been developed over long periods of time and undertaken by interested parties at all levels.

The European approach through the Bologna Process was not initiated by the European Union, which gives it an interesting dimension. The European integration through the European Union and market integration approach has laid the foundation for the Bologna Process. The Bologna Process clearly identifies the common market space and citizenry of the European Union as a key contributor to and benefiter of the convergence of higher education. Additionally, the creation of supra-national qualification and implementation mechanisms shows a deeper level of integration than initiatives which rely solely on national-level implementation mechanisms.

The South American example, on the other hand, does not have supra-national bodies for ensuring implementation and comparability of systems. It leaves implementation to the individual member states and allows the MERCOSUR structure to bring the key stakeholders together for additional consideration of policy measures. The goals of the MERCOSUR-Educativo programme seem to be

integration, but the region has undertaken more of a regional cooperation approach to higher education at this stage.

The SADC is an outlier in that it does not have a clear theoretical approach. As discussed in Chapter 4, the SADC has adopted many different approaches to its integration and, although it claims to use a development integration approach, appears more to be exercising market integration and regional cooperation. The SADC Education and Training Protocol appears mostly an exercise in regional cooperation because of the lack of region-wide mechanisms for implementation and the lack of a mechanism for ensuring equal benefit to all Member States.

The impact of the regional goals on higher education is obvious in both Bologna and MERCOSUR-Educativo. While this is a seeming problem on behalf of institutions and individual state initiatives, it can also be regarded as positive attention for higher education as an institution because of the recognition of its close link with economic development and success. The close link between regional goals and higher education initiatives presents the problem of creating a production line of human capital only for market needs, but gives higher education as an institution the status that it deserves as a key factor in the economic success of countries and regions.

With regard to degrees of “regionness”, or the cohesive identity of a group of states either geographically linked or with shared political or economic interests, the various regions in this analysis are influenced by this identity.

It can be argued that Europe’s regionness, through the EU and Bologna, is at a more cohesive stage than the MERCOSUR or SADC. This regional identity makes discussion about beneficiaries of the Bologna Process easier to identify. The identity and social cohesion also make ideas of ‘European’ knowledge and research more palatable, whereas the limited degrees of regionness in South America and southern Africa impact the extent to which each are able to develop higher education and research areas.

The MERCOSUR countries have taken steps toward common tariffs and agreements between the region and other parts of the world, but have limits in establishing this identity due to power politics at the regional level. This problem also plagues the SADC, as well. The regionness in the MERCOSUR, then, is perhaps between levels three and four, or between the level of ‘regional society’ and ‘regional community’. There are some structures seeking to transcend the nation state and a common identity of the member states with some other areas of the world.

Southern Africa's "regionness" is arguably ambiguous with regard to these criteria. As discussed in Chapter 4, it is fair to assess southern Africa as loosely in stage three, or 'regional society', with objectives of reaching stage four, 'regional community'. The level of institutional and mutual trust suggested by the third stage of 'regional society' have not been accomplished, so the likelihood of achieving the goal of reaching a 'regional community' at this stage is quite distant. The sense of regional connection, or regionness, is important when discussing various development, economic, social, and cultural initiatives because of the necessary support from constituents.

The political will of the European and South American countries to make comparable their higher education systems has led to progressive measures to accomplish these goals. The same political will does not seem to be present in all of the Member States of the SADC, which presents problems for implementation of regional strategies to harmonise higher education.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Although this is not intended to be a policy document, I would like to offer a few recommendations.

Firstly, goals of regional higher education arrangements should be narrow and clearly articulated if they are to be achieved. The goals and implementation should be clearly discussed and stated with frequent follow-up meetings to hold participants accountable. Additionally, caution should be taken when considering widening goals of these arrangements before previous goals are met.

Secondly, caution should be taken in terms of seeking competitiveness over cooperation at the regional level. The tension between these goals becomes tenuous at the regional level and regional organizations must consider this in establishing goals. The various actors involved in decision-making must be considered as well as the effects of these decisions on various stakeholders.

Thirdly, regional higher education initiatives that have taken a voluntary approach have shown more success, so mechanisms to facilitate political will of participating countries should be instilled in these relationships either through voluntary membership or voluntary accession of regional higher education policies. This can perhaps occur separate from a regional economic organization, as the Bologna case suggests. Although the SADC Protocol provided an opportunity for individual member states to sign on to the agreement, political relationships within regional organisations in

Africa are complex and often more symbolic than effectual. Understanding this complexity provides a foundation for contemplating future policy initiatives in southern Africa.

Fourthly, mobility is a central issue in regional higher education arrangements. Regional bodies that seek to regionalise higher education must have a consistent approach to mobility within the region and apply this to mobility of staff and students. The SADC case presents a difficulty in terms of migration and mobility at the moment, but future policy related to both higher education regionalisation and mobility should consider the connection between these two areas.

Fifthly, supra-state mechanisms for ensuring quality and accreditation at the regional level have shown success in Europe, but have not been implemented in full force in either South America or in southern Africa, which weakens the overall transferability of credit and mobility of students and workers in these regions. Some regional-level institutions should be supported or created in each case to facilitate the implementation of regional arrangements, but only after national-level institutions have been allowed an opportunity to develop. It is important not to belittle the valuable process of allowing a state to recognise its own needs, strengths, and weaknesses through its own institutional development, especially in the case of post-colonial states like those in South America and Africa. The MERCOSUR case reveals the ways that regional agreements can facilitate national-level institutional development, which will ultimately benefit the region. The southern African case can learn from this example.

Lastly, future research should be conducted about the type of knowledge being pursued in various regional arrangements as well as the economic impact of each type of knowledge. Also, future research should be conducted about the relationship between the BRICS countries in terms of higher education. BRICS offers an alternative regional space than those discussed in this thesis and could provide an interesting area for future research in terms of regional higher education cooperation. The development of South-South trade and relationships also requires transferability of knowledge and information which could be improved through the creation of relationships between tertiary institutions.

## 5.4 CONCLUSION

Regional higher education initiatives are diverse in nature and implementation, but some lessons can be learned from these experiences. Although the contexts of each case differ, southern Africa can learn lessons from the South American and European experiences. Clearly stated and narrow goals, political commitment, and frequent meetings to ensure progressive implementation of the objectives have been shown in both the MERCOSUR and Bologna case studies as contributing to the relative success of each project. Additionally, the variables of governance, structure, and legitimacy have been applied to each case and used to reveal similarities and differences in each case in order to extrapolate lessons for regional higher education arrangements broadly and in southern Africa specifically.

Ultimately, there are gaps and limits in the SADC's approaches to higher education governance and valuable lessons can be learned from Europe and South America. The SADC's 1997 Education and Training Protocol has not been effective in reaching its stated goals, but the use of lessons from the European and South American cases can provide a fertile ground for policy formulation and regionalising higher education in southern Africa in the future.

The issue of mobility is of concern in each case and must be considered and included in regional higher education arrangements. The ambivalent approach of the SADC creates a difficult foundation for efforts to regionalise higher education.

The context of internationalisation of education as a response to globalisation is unlikely to decrease in the future. This study has differentiated the various processes of globalisation, regionalisation, and internationalisation in order to provide context for understanding these regional approaches and a foundation for future research. Also, the tensions and trends inherent in the current global trends are important to understand and consider, as this thesis has illustrated in its discussion of competition versus cooperation, governance structures, and the growing focus on knowledge in the global economy.

The fact that knowledge is becoming a central focus in the international economy should be of concern to policymakers at the state and regional levels. This thesis has discussed the importance of knowledge and the resulting focus on higher education as a source for developing knowledge.

Understanding this, it is vital, particularly for southern Africa, to learn from the cases in this thesis in order to develop effectively into the future and compete in the global knowledge economy.

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